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MORNING

By

IK MARVEL

1. Essays. American

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"For a moment I held both fingers and flowers"
—*Page 65*

In the Morning

MORNING

FROM

REVERIES OF A BACHELOR

BY

IK. MARVEL

(DONALD G. MITCHELL)

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MORNING

WHICH IS THE PAST

SCHOOL DAYS
THE SEA
FATHER-LAND
A ROMAN GIRL
THE APPENINES
ENRICA

Morning.

It is a spring day under the oaks—the loved oaks of a once cherished home—now, alas, mine no longer!

I had sold the old farmhouse, and the groves, and the cool springs, where I had bathed my head in the heats of summer; and with the first warm days of May, they were to pass from me forever. Seventy years they had been in the possession of my mother's family; for seventy years, they had borne the same name of proprietorship; for seventy years, the Lares of our country home, often neglected, almost forgotten—yet brightened from time to time, by gleams of heart-worship, had held their place in the sweet valley of Elmgrove.

And in this changeful, bustling, American life of ours seventy years is no child's holiday. The hurry of action, and progress, may pass over it with quick step; but the foot-prints are many and deep. You surely will not wonder that it made me sad and thoughtful, to break

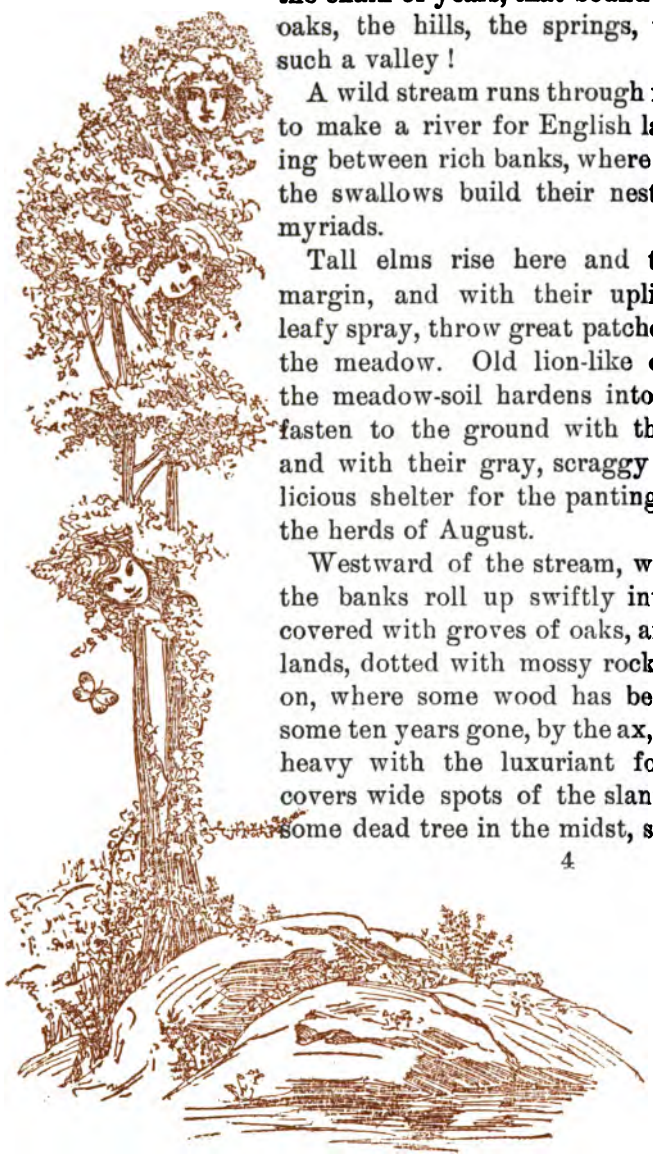
29X48

the chain of years, that bound to my heart, the oaks, the hills, the springs, the valley—and such a valley!

A wild stream runs through it—large enough to make a river for English landscape—winding between rich banks, where in summer time, the swallows build their nests, and brood by myriads.

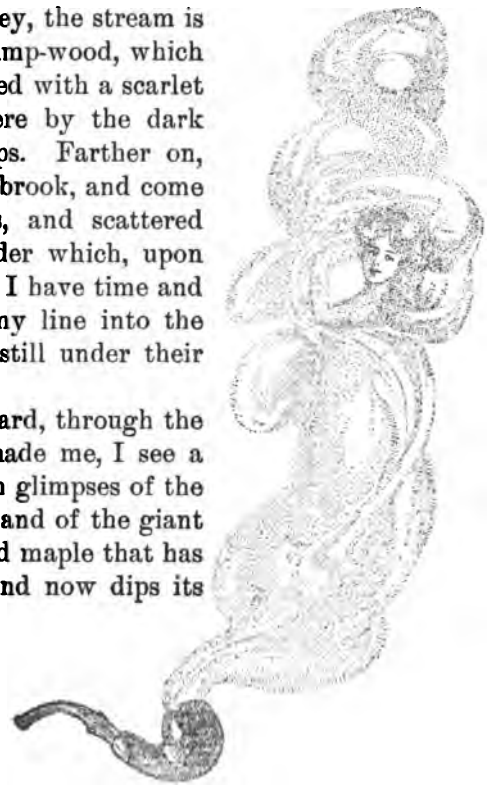
Tall elms rise here and there along the margin, and with their uplifted arms, and leafy spray, throw great patches of shade upon the meadow. Old lion-like oaks, too, where the meadow-soil hardens into rolling upland, fasten to the ground with their ridgy roots: and with their gray, scraggy limbs, make delicious shelter for the panting workers, or for the herds of August.

Westward of the stream, where I am lying, the banks roll up swiftly into sloping hills, covered with groves of oaks, and green pasture lands, dotted with mossy rocks. And farther on, where some wood has been swept down, some ten years gone, by the ax, the new growth, heavy with the luxuriant foliage of spring, covers wide spots of the slanting land; while some dead tree in the midst, still stretches out



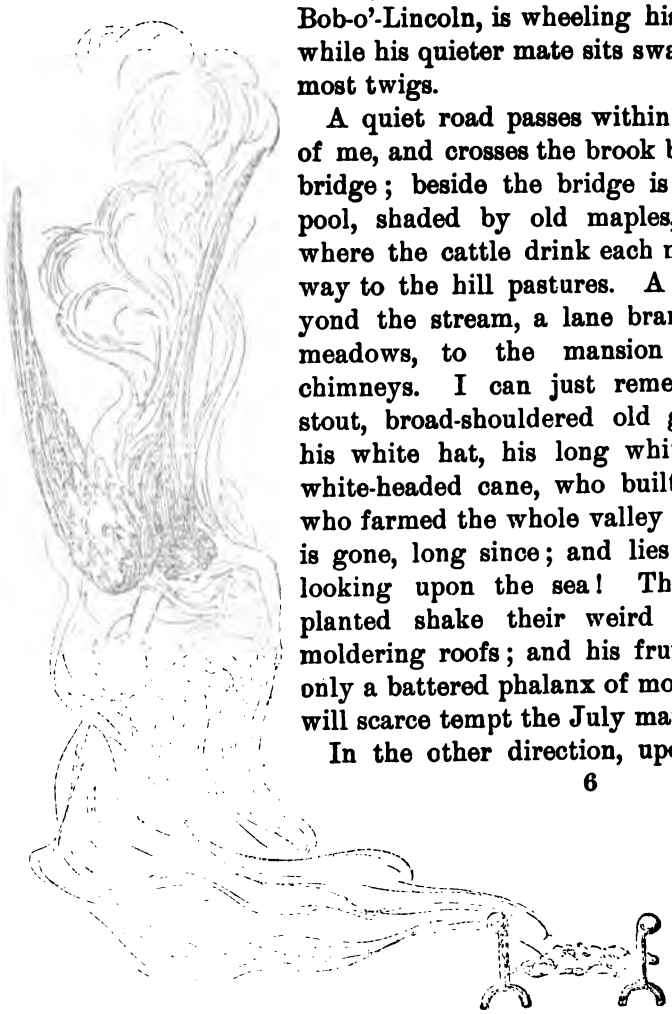
its bare arms to the blast—a solitary mourner over the wreck of its forest brothers.

Eastward, the ridgy bank passes into wavy meadows, upon whose farther edge, you see the roofs of an old mansion, with tall chimneys and taller elm-trees shading it. Beyond, the hills rise gently, and sweep away into wood-crowned heights, that are blue with distance. At the upper end of the valley, the stream is lost to the eye, in a wide swamp-wood, which in the autumn time is covered with a scarlet sheet, blotched here and there by the dark crimson stains of the ash-tops. Farther on, the hills crowd close to the brook, and come down with granite boulders, and scattered birch-trees, and beeches—under which, upon the smoky mornings of May, I have time and again loitered, and thrown my line into the pools, which curl dark and still under their tangled roots.



Below, and looking southward, through the openings of the oaks that shade me, I see a broad stretch of meadow, with glimpses of the silver surface of the stream, and of the giant solitary elms, and of some old maple that has vielded to the spring tides, and now dips its

lower boughs in the insidious current—and of clumps of alders, and willow tufts—above which, even now, the black-and-white coated Bob-o'-Lincoln, is wheeling his musical flight, while his quieter mate sits swaying on the topmost twigs.

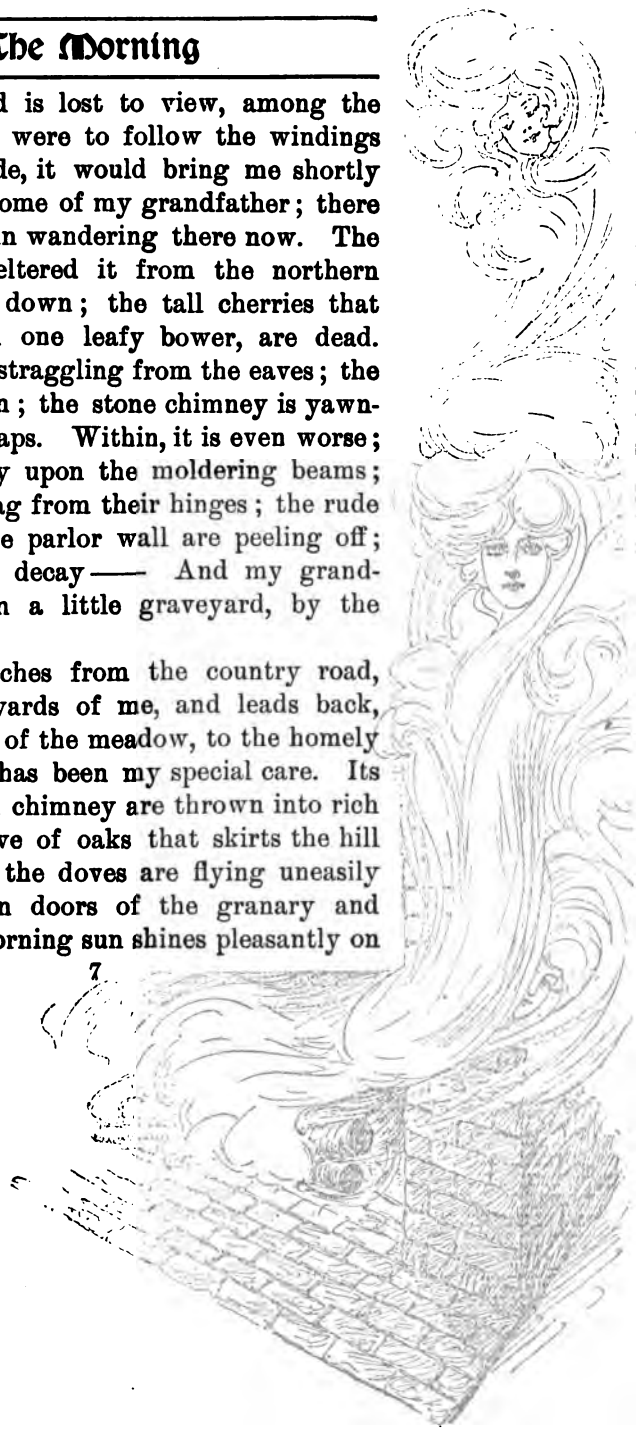


A quiet road passes within a short distance of me, and crosses the brook by a rude timber bridge; beside the bridge is a broad glassy pool, shaded by old maples, and hickories, where the cattle drink each morning on their way to the hill pastures. A step or two beyond the stream, a lane branches across the meadows, to the mansion with the tall chimneys. I can just remember now, the stout, broad-shouldered old gentleman, with his white hat, his long white hair, and his white-headed cane, who built the house, and who farmed the whole valley around me. He is gone, long since; and lies in a graveyard looking upon the sea! The elms that he planted shake their weird arms over the moldering roofs; and his fruit garden shows only a battered phalanx of mossy limbs, which will scarce tempt the July marauders.

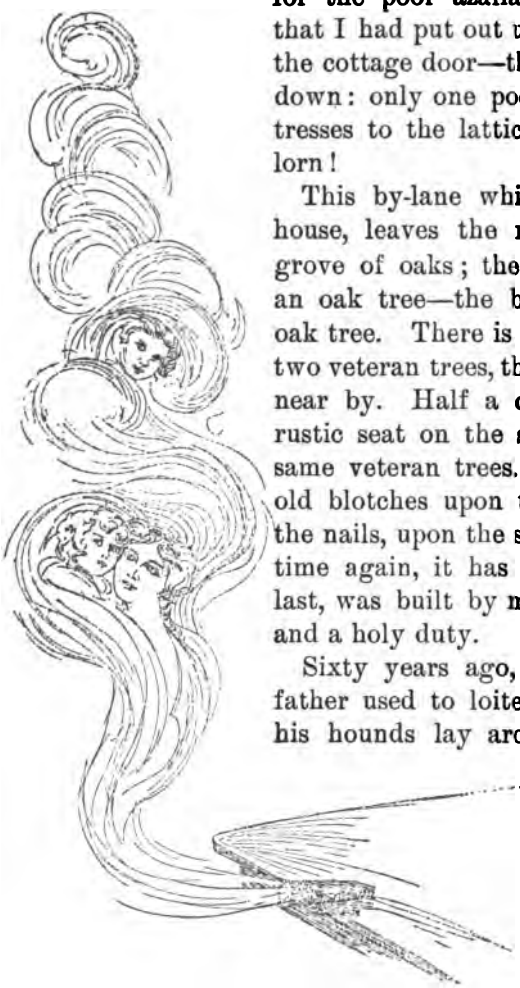
In the other direction, upon this side the

brook, the road is lost to view, among the trees; but if I were to follow the windings upon the hillside, it would bring me shortly upon the old home of my grandfather; there is no pleasure in wandering there now. The woods that sheltered it from the northern winds, are cut down; the tall cherries that made the yard one leafy bower, are dead. The cornice is straggling from the eaves; the porch has fallen; the stone chimney is yawning with wide gaps. Within, it is even worse; the floors sway upon the moldering beams; the doors all sag from their hinges; the rude frescos upon the parlor wall are peeling off; all is going to decay—— And my grandfather sleeps in a little graveyard, by the garden wall.

A lane branches from the country road, within a few yards of me, and leads back, along the edge of the meadow, to the homely cottage, which has been my special care. Its gray porch, and chimney are thrown into rich relief, by a grove of oaks that skirts the hill behind it; and the doves are flying uneasily about the open doors of the granary and barns. The morning sun shines pleasantly on



the gray group of buildings; and the lowing of the cows, not yet driven afield, adds to the charming homeliness of the scene. But alas, for the poor azalias, and laurels, and vines, that I had put out upon the little knoll before the cottage door—they are all of them trodden down: only one poor creeper hangs its loose tresses to the lattice, all disheveled, and forlorn!



This by-lane which opens upon my farm-house, leaves the road in the middle of a grove of oaks; the brown gate swings upon an oak tree—the brown gate closes upon an oak tree. There is a rustic seat, built between two veteran trees, that rise from a little hillock near by. Half a century ago, there was a rustic seat on the same hillock—between the same veteran trees. I can trace marks of the old blotches upon the bark, and the scars of the nails, upon the scathed trunks. Time, and time again, it has been renewed. This, the last, was built by my own hands—a cheerful, and a holy duty.

Sixty years ago, they tell me, my grandfather used to loiter here with his gun, while his hounds lay around under the scattered

oaks. Now he sleeps, as I said, in the little graveyard yonder, where I can see one or two white tablets glimmering through the foliage. I never knew him; he died, as the brown stone table says, aged twenty-six. Yesterday I climbed the wall that skirts the yard, and plucked a flower from his tomb. I take out now from my pocketbook, that flower—a frail, first-blooming violet—and write upon the slip of paper, into which I have thrust its delicate stem—"From my grandfather's tomb —1850."

But other feet have trod upon this knoll—far more dear to me. The old neighbors have sometimes told me, how they have seen forty years ago, two rosy-faced girls, idling on this spot, under the shade, and gathering acorns, and making oak-leaved garlands, for their foreheads —— Alas, alas, the garlands they wear now, are not earthly garlands!

Upon that spot, and upon that rustic seat, I am lying this May morning. I have placed my gun against a tree; my shot-pouch I have hung upon a broken limb. I have thrown my feet upon the bench, and lean against one of the gnarled oaks, between which the seat is

built. My hat is off; my book and paper, are beside me; and my pencil trembles in my fingers, as I catch sight of those white marble tablets, gleaming through the trees, from the height above me, like beckoning angel faces. If they were alive! two more near, and dear friends, in a world where we count friends by units!

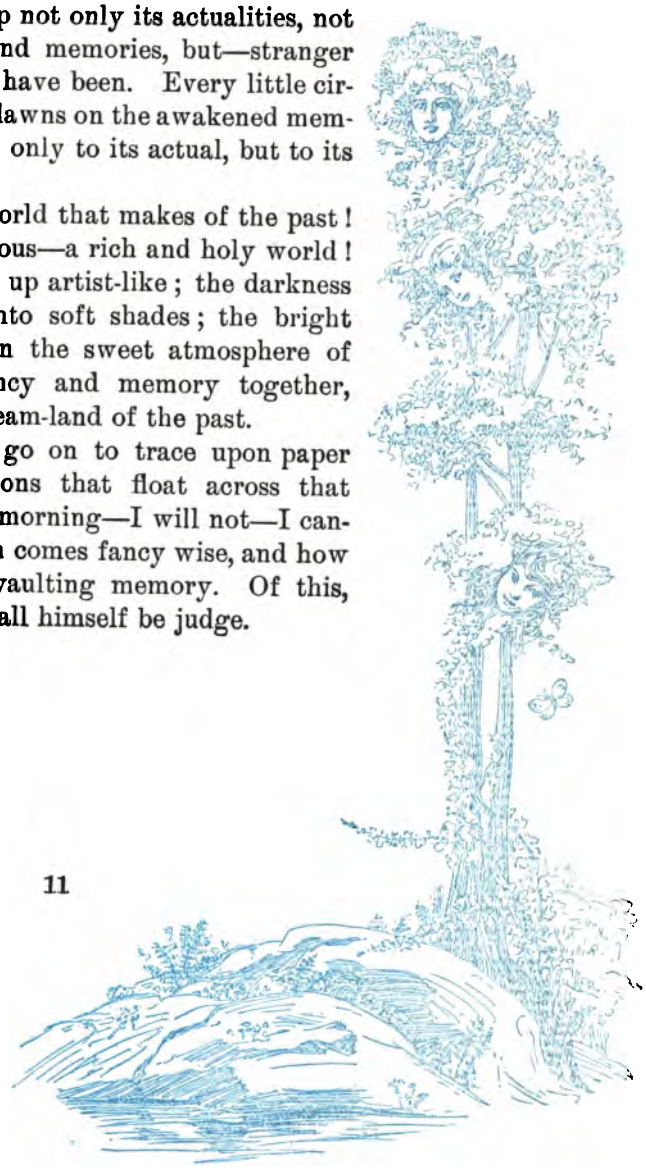
It is morning—a bright spring morning under the oaks—these loved oaks of a once cherished home. Last night, I slept in yonder mansion, under the elms. The cattle going to the pasture are drinking in the pool by the bridge; the boy who drives them, is making his shrill halloo echo against the hills. The sun has risen fairly over the eastern heights, and shines brightly upon the meadow land and brightly upon a bend of the brook below me. The birds—the bluebirds sweetest and noisiest of all—are singing over me in the branches. A woodpecker is hammering at a dry limb aloft; and Carlo pricks up his ears, and looks at me—then stretches out his head upon his paws, in a warm bit of the sunshine—and sleeps.

Morning brings back to me the past; and

the past brings up not only its actualities, not only its events, and memories, but—stranger still—what might have been. Every little circumstance which dawns on the awakened memory, is traced not only to its actual, but to its possible issues.

What a wide world that makes of the past! a great and gorgeous—a rich and holy world! Your fancy fills it up artist-like; the darkness is mellowed off into soft shades; the bright spots are veiled in the sweet atmosphere of distance; and fancy and memory together, make up a rich dream-land of the past.

And now, as I go on to trace upon paper some of the visions that float across that dreamland of the morning—I will not—I cannot say, how much comes fancy wise, and how much from this vaulting memory. Of this, the kind reader shall himself be judge.



THE MORNING

ISABEL and I—she is my cousin, and is seven years old, and I am ten—are sitting together on the bank of the stream, under an oak tree that leans half way over to the water. I am much stronger than she, and taller by a head. I hold in my hands a little alder rod, with which I am fishing for the roach and minnows, that play in the pool below us.

She is watching the cork tossing on the water, or playing with the captured fish that lie upon the bank. She has auburn ringlets that fall down upon her shoulders; and her straw hat lies back upon them, held only by the strip of ribbon, that passes under her chin. But the sun does not shine upon her head; for the oak tree above us is full of leaves; and only here and there, a dimple of the sunlight plays upon the pool, where I am fishing.

Her eye is hazel, and bright; and now and then she turns it on me with a look of girlish

curiosity, as I lift up my rod—and again in playful menace, as she grasps in her little fingers one of the dead fish, and threatens to throw it back upon the stream. Her little feet hang over the edge of the bank; and from time to time, she reaches down to dip her toe in the water; and laughs a girlish laugh of defiance, as I scold her for frightening away the fishes.

"Bella," I say, "what if you should tumble in the river?"

"But I won't."

"Yes, but if you should?"

"Why then you would pull me out."

"But if I wouldn't pull you out?"

"But I know you would; wouldn't you, Paul?"

"What makes you think so, Bella?"

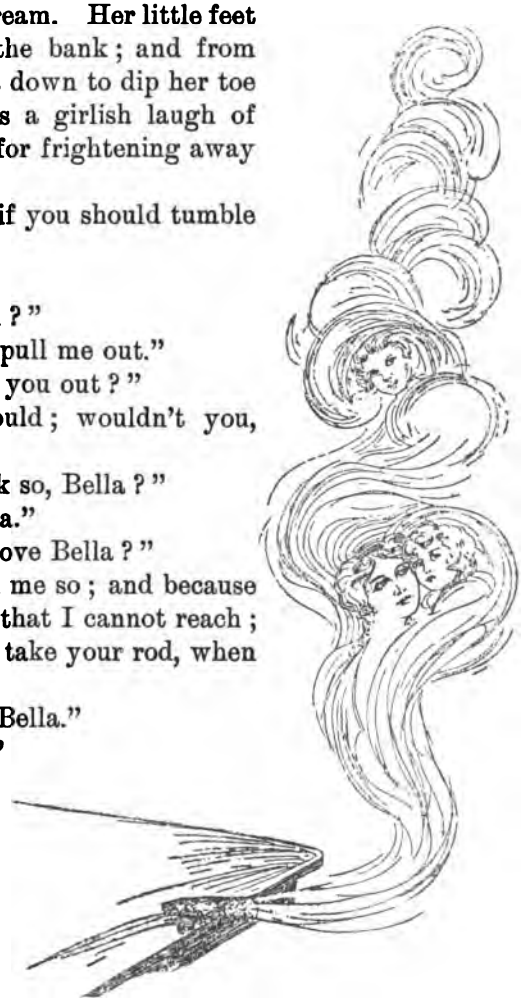
"Because you love Bella."

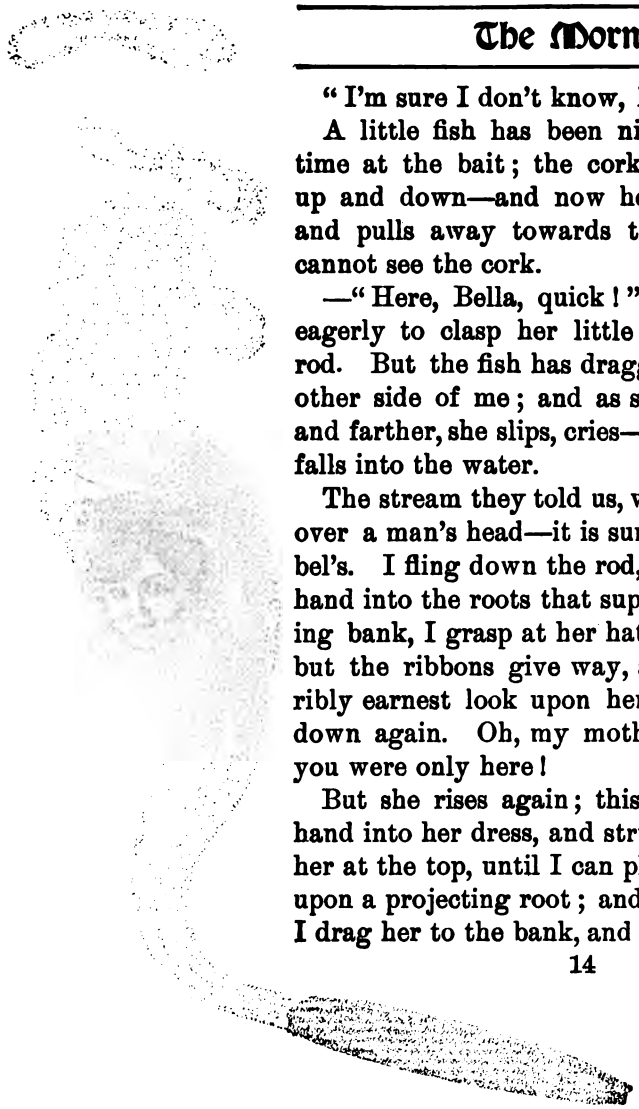
"How do you know I love Bella?"

"Because once you told me so; and because you pick flowers for me that I cannot reach; and because you let me take your rod, when you have a fish upon it."

"But that's no reason, Bella."

"Then what is, Paul?"





"I'm sure I don't know, Bella."

A little fish has been nibbling for a long time at the bait; the cork has been bobbing up and down—and now he is fairly hooked, and pulls away towards the bank, and you cannot see the cork.

—"Here, Bella, quick!"—and she springs eagerly to clasp her little hands around the rod. But the fish has dragged it away on the other side of me; and as she reaches farther, and farther, she slips, cries—"Oh, Paul!" and falls into the water.

The stream they told us, when we came, was over a man's head—it is surely over little Isabel's. I fling down the rod, and thrusting one hand into the roots that support the overhanging bank, I grasp at her hat, as she comes up; but the ribbons give way, and I see the terribly earnest look upon her face as she goes down again. Oh, my mother—thought I—if you were only here!

But she rises again; this time, I thrust my hand into her dress, and struggling hard, keep her at the top, until I can place my foot down upon a projecting root; and so bracing myself, I drag her to the bank, and having climbed up,

"But boyhood has its loves."

—*Page 15*

take hold of her belt firmly with both hands, and drag her out; and poor Isabel, choked, chilled, and wet, is lying upon the grass.

I commence crying aloud. The workmen in the fields hear me, and come down. One takes Isabel in his arms, and I follow on foot to our uncle's home upon the hill.

—"Oh, my dear children!" says my mother; and she takes Isabel in her arms; and presently with dry clothes, and blazing wood-fire, little Bella smiles again. I am at my mother's knee.

"I told you so, Paul," says Isabel—"aunty, doesn't Paul love me?"

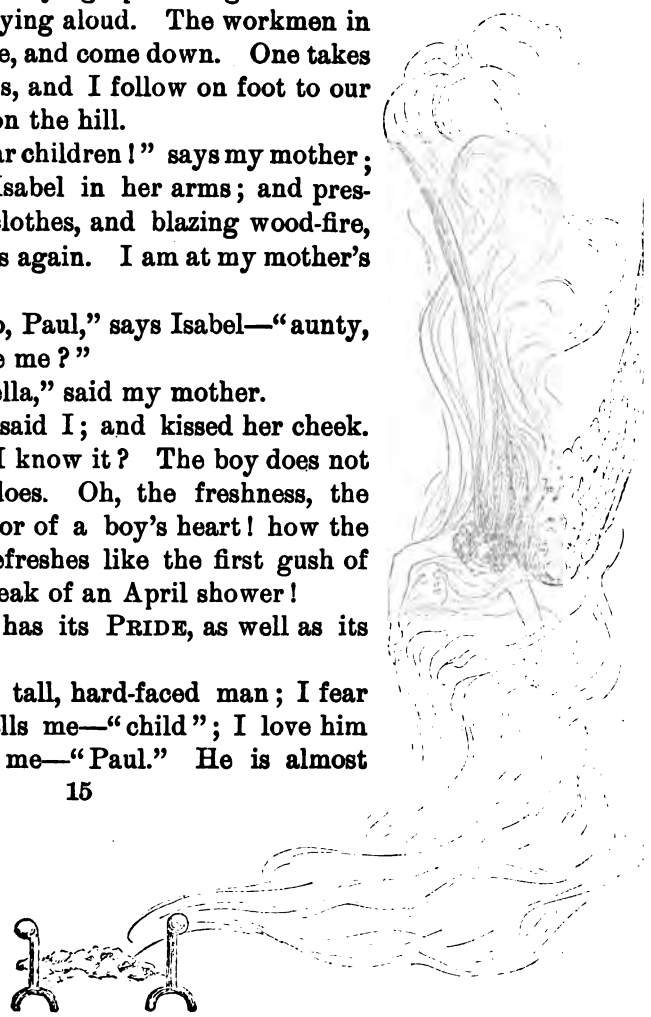
"I hope so, Bella," said my mother.

"I know so," said I; and kissed her cheek.

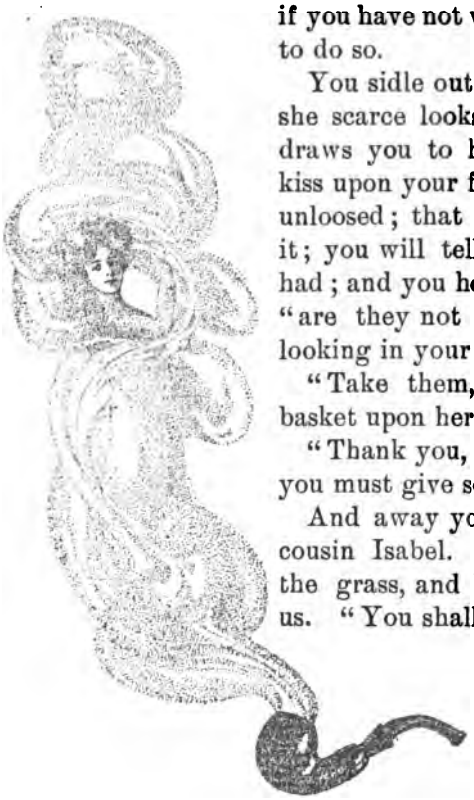
And how did I know it? The boy does not ask; the man does. Oh, the freshness, the honesty, the vigor of a boy's heart! how the memory of it refreshes like the first gush of spring, or the break of an April shower!

But boyhood has its PRIDE, as well as its LOVES.

My uncle is a tall, hard-faced man; I fear him when he calls me—"child"; I love him when he calls me—"Paul." He is almost



always busy with his books; and when I steal into the library door, as I sometimes do, with a string of fish, or a heaping basket of nuts to show to him—he looks for a moment curiously at them, sometimes takes them in his fingers —gives them back to me, and turns over the leaves of his book. You are afraid to ask him, if you have not worked bravely; yet you want to do so.



You sidle out softly, and go to your mother; she scarce looks at your little stores; but she draws you to her with her arm, and prints a kiss upon your forehead. Now your tongue is unloosed; that kiss and that action have done it; you will tell what capital luck you have had; and you hold up your tempting trophies; "are they not great, mother?" But she is looking in your face, and not at your prize.

"Take them, mother," and you lay the basket upon her lap.

"Thank you, Paul, I do not wish them: but you must give some to Bella."

And away you go to find laughing, playful, cousin Isabel. And we sit down together on the grass, and I pour out my stores between us. "You shall take, Bella, what you wish in

your apron, and then when study hours are over, we will have such a time down by the big rock in the meadow!"

"But I do not know if papa will let me," says Isabel.

"Bella," I say, "do you love your papa?"

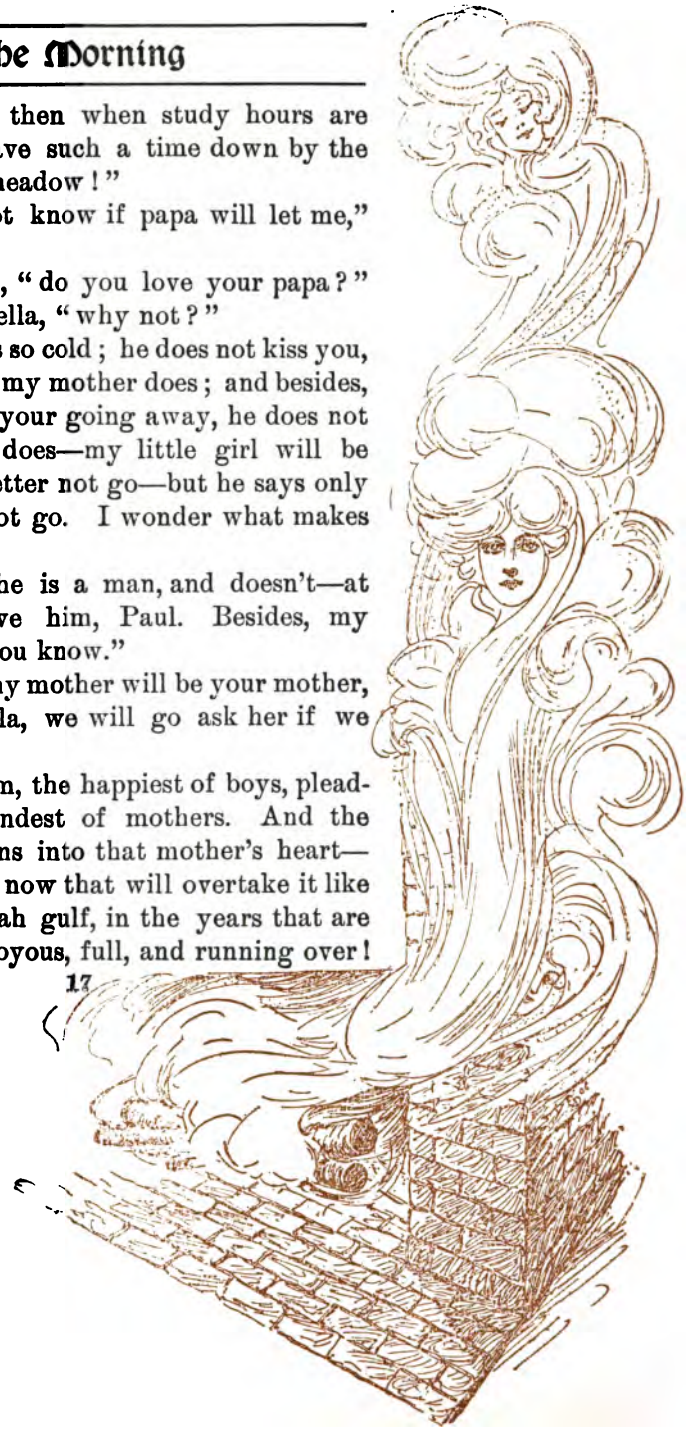
"Yes," says Bella, "why not?"

"Because he is so cold; he does not kiss you, Bella, so often as my mother does; and besides, when he forbids your going away, he does not say, as mother does—my little girl will be tired, she had better not go—but he says only—Isabel must not go. I wonder what makes him talk so?"

"Why, Paul, he is a man, and doesn't—at any rate, I love him, Paul. Besides, my mother is sick, you know."

"But Isabel, my mother will be your mother, too. Come, Bella, we will go ask her if we may go."

And there I am, the happiest of boys, pleading with the kindest of mothers. And the young heart leans into that mother's heart—none of the void now that will overtake it like an opening Korah gulf, in the years that are to come. It is joyous, full, and running over!



"You may go," she says, "if your uncle is willing."

"But mamma, I am afraid to ask him; I do not believe he loves me."

"Don't say so, Paul," and she draws you to her side; as if she would supply by her own love, the lacking love of a universe.

"Go, with your cousin Isabel, and ask him kindly; and if he says no—make no reply."

And with courage, we go hand in hand, and steal in at the library door. There he sits—I seem to see him now—in the old wainscoted room, covered over with books and pictures; and he wears his heavy-rimmed spectacles, and is poring over some big volume, full of hard words, that are not in any spelling-book. We step up softly; and Isabel lays her little hand upon his arm; and he turns, and says—"Well, my little daughter?"

I ask if we may go down to the big rock in the meadow?

He looks at Isabel, and says he is afraid—"we cannot go."

"But why, uncle? It is only a little way, and we will be very careful."

"I am afraid, my children; do not say any

more: you can have the pony, and Tray, and play at home."

"But, uncle ——"

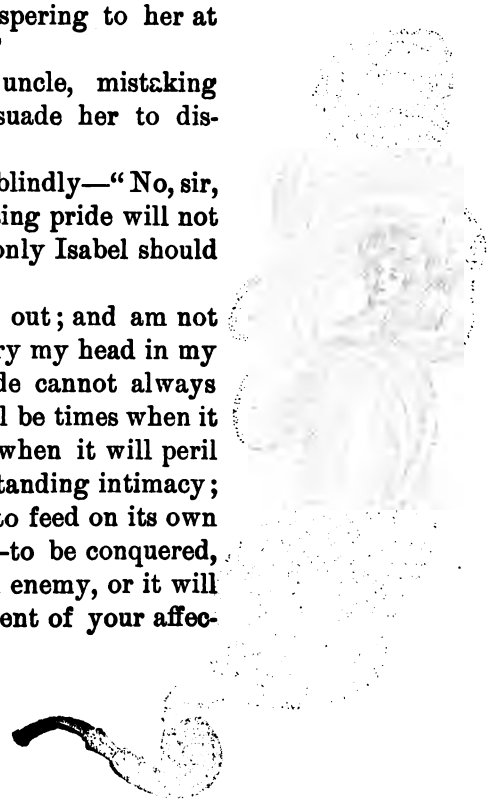
"You need say no more, my child."

I pinch the hand of little Isabel, and look in her eye—my own half filling with tears. I feel that my forehead is flushed, and I hide it behind Bella's tresses—whispering to her at the same time—"Let us go."

"What, sir," says my uncle, mistaking my meaning—"do you persuade her to disobey?"

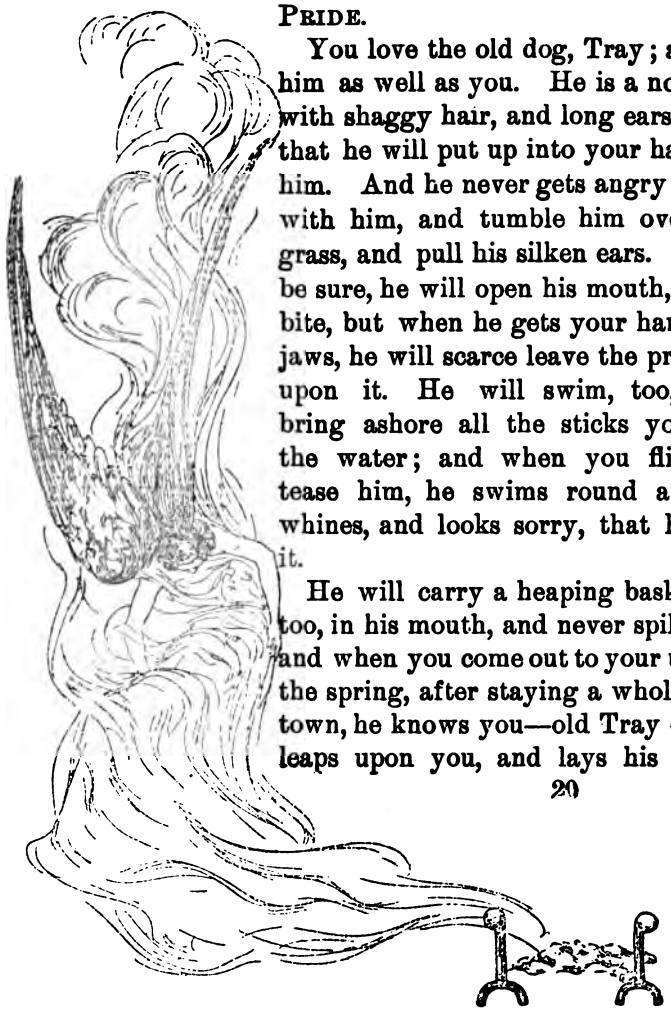
Now I am angry, and say blindly—"No, sir, I didn't!" And then my rising pride will not let me say, that I wished only Isabel should go out with me.

Bella cries; and I shrink out; and am not easy until I have run to bury my head in my mother's bosom. Alas! pride cannot always find such covert! There will be times when it will harass you strangely; when it will peril friendships—will sever old, standing intimacy; and then—no resource but to feed on its own bitterness. Hateful pride!—to be conquered, as a man would conquer an enemy, or it will make whirlpools in the current of your affec-



tions—nay, turn the whole tide of the heart into rough, and unaccustomed channels?

But boyhood has its GRIEF, too, apart from PRIDE.



You love the old dog, Tray; and Bella loves him as well as you. He is a noble old fellow, with shaggy hair, and long ears, and big paws, that he will put up into your hand, if you ask him. And he never gets angry when you play with him, and tumble him over in the long grass, and pull his silken ears. Sometimes, to be sure, he will open his mouth, as if he would bite, but when he gets your hand fairly in his jaws, he will scarce leave the print of his teeth upon it. He will swim, too, bravely, and bring ashore all the sticks you throw upon the water; and when you fling a stone to tease him, he swims round and round, and whines, and looks sorry, that he cannot find it.

He will carry a heaping basket full of nuts, too, in his mouth, and never spill one of them; and when you come out to your uncle's home in the spring, after staying a whole winter in the town, he knows you—old Tray does! And he leaps upon you, and lays his paws on your

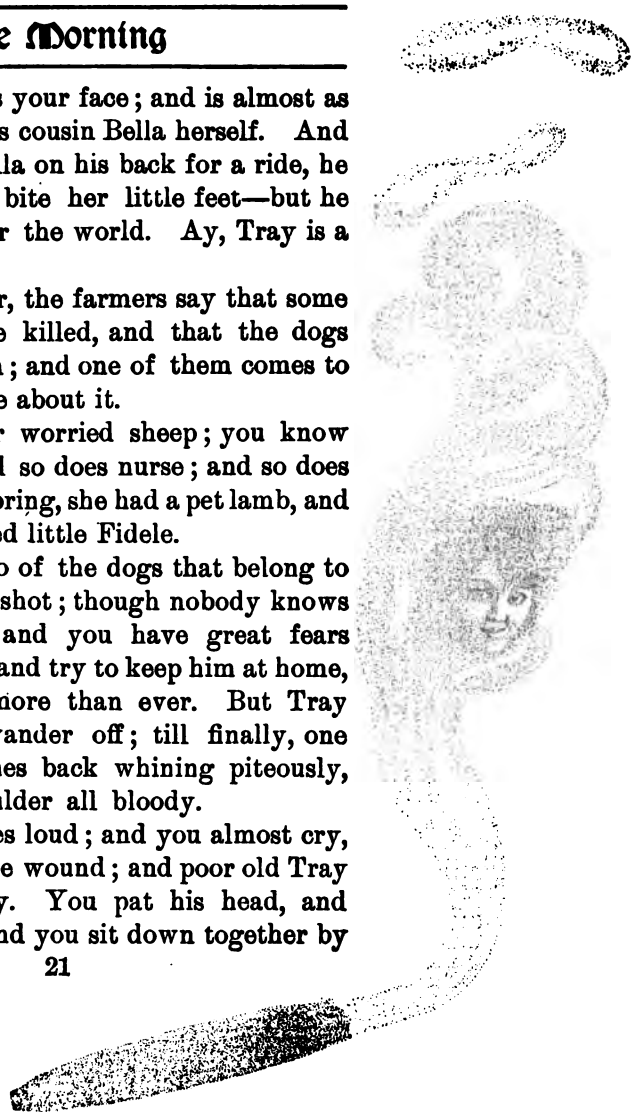
shoulder, and licks your face; and is almost as glad to see you, as cousin Bella herself. And when you put Bella on his back for a ride, he only pretends to bite her little feet—but he wouldn't do it for the world. Ay, Tray is a noble old dog!

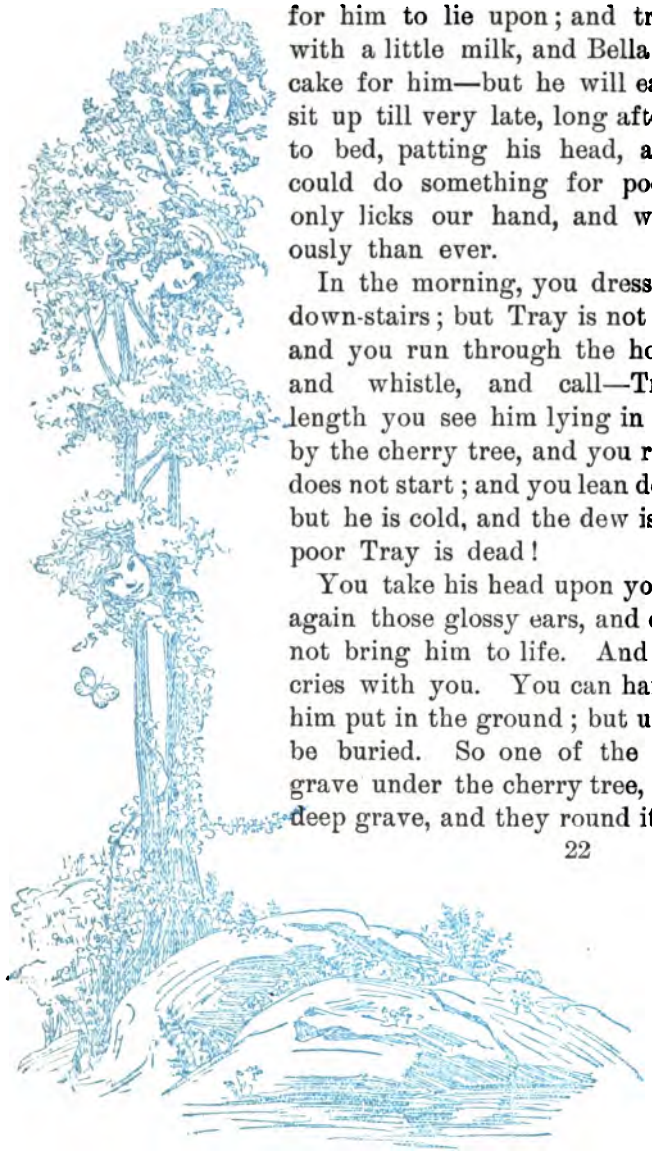
But one summer, the farmers say that some of their sheep are killed, and that the dogs have worried them; and one of them comes to talk with my uncle about it.

But Tray never worried sheep; you know he never did; and so does nurse; and so does Bella; for in the spring, she had a pet lamb, and Tray never worried little Fidele.

And one or two of the dogs that belong to the neighbors are shot; though nobody knows who shot them; and you have great fears about poor Tray; and try to keep him at home, and fondle him more than ever. But Tray will sometimes wander off; till finally, one afternoon, he comes back whining piteously, and with his shoulder all bloody.

Little Bella cries loud; and you almost cry, as nurse dresses the wound; and poor old Tray whines very sadly. You pat his head, and Bella pats him; and you sit down together by





him on the floor of the porch, and bring a rug for him to lie upon; and try and tempt him with a little milk, and Bella brings a piece of cake for him—but he will eat nothing. You sit up till very late, long after Bella has gone to bed, patting his head, and wishing you could do something for poor Tray; but he only licks our hand, and whines more piteously than ever.

In the morning, you dress early, and hurry down-stairs; but Tray is not lying on the rug; and you run through the house to find him, and whistle, and call—Tray—Tray! At length you see him lying in his old place, out by the cherry tree, and you run to him; but he does not start; and you lean down to pat him—but he is cold, and the dew is wet upon him—poor Tray is dead!

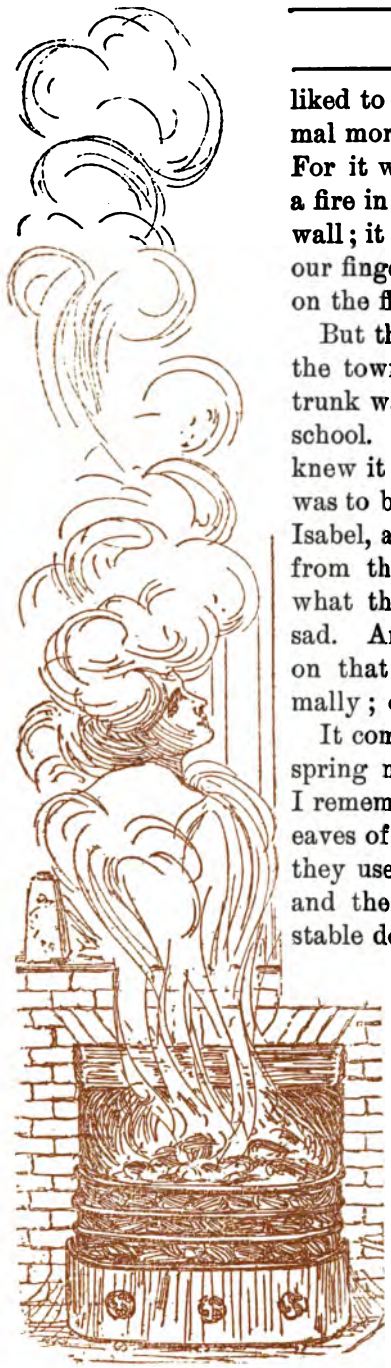
You take his head upon your knees, and pat again those glossy ears, and cry; but you cannot bring him to life. And Bella comes, and cries with you. You can hardly bear to have him put in the ground; but uncle says he must be buried. So one of the workmen digs a grave under the cherry tree, where he died—a deep grave, and they round it over with earth,

and smooth the sods upon it—even now I can trace Tray's grave.

You and Bella together, put up a little slab for a tombstone; and she hangs flowers upon it, and ties them there with a bit of ribbon. You can scarce play all that day; and afterwards, many weeks later, when you are rambling over the fields, or lingering by the brook, throwing off sticks into the eddies, you think of old Tray's shaggy coat, and of his big paw, and of his honest eye; and the memory of your boyish grief comes upon you; and you say with tears, "Poor Tray!" And Bella too, in her sad sweet tones, says—"Poor old Tray—he is dead!"

School Days

The morning was cloudy and threatened rain; besides, it was autumn weather, and the winds were getting harsh, and rustling among the tree-tops that shaded the house, most dismally. I did not dare to listen. If indeed, I were to stay by the bright fires of home, and gather the nuts as they fell, and pile up the falling leaves, to make great bonfires, with Ben, and the rest of the boys, I should have



liked to listen, and would have braved the dismal morning with the cheerfullest of them all. For it would have been a capital time to light a fire in the little oven we had built under the wall; it would have been so pleasant to warm our fingers at it, and to roast the great russets on the flat stones that made the top.

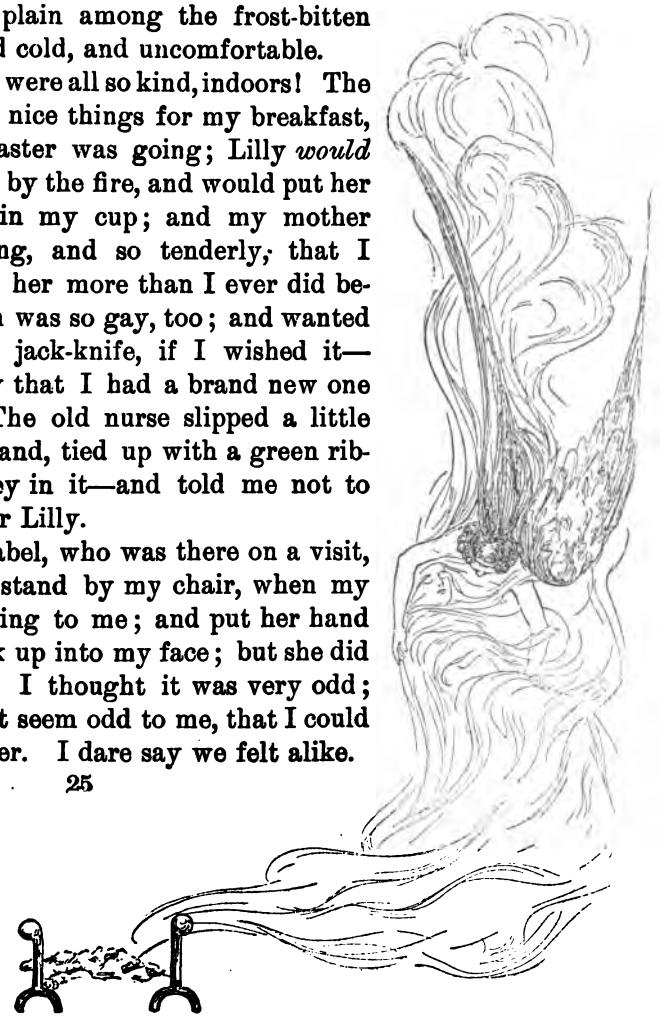
But this was not in store for me. I had bid the town boys good-bye, the day before; my trunk was all packed; I was to go away—to school. The little oven would go to ruin—I knew it would. I was to leave my home. I was to bid my mother good-bye, and Lilly, and Isabel, and all the rest; and was to go away from them so far, that I should only know what they were all doing—in letters. It *was* sad. And then to have the clouds come over on that morning, and the winds sigh so dismally; oh, it was too bad, I thought!

It comes back to me as I lie here this bright spring morning, as if it were only yesterday. I remember that the pigeons skulked under the eaves of the carriage house, and did not sit, as they used to do in summer, upon the ridge; and the chickens huddled together about the stable doors, as if they were afraid of the cold

autumn. And in the garden the white holly-hock stood shivering, and bowed to the wind, as if their time had come. The yellow musk-melons showed plain among the frost-bitten vines, and looked cold, and uncomfortable.

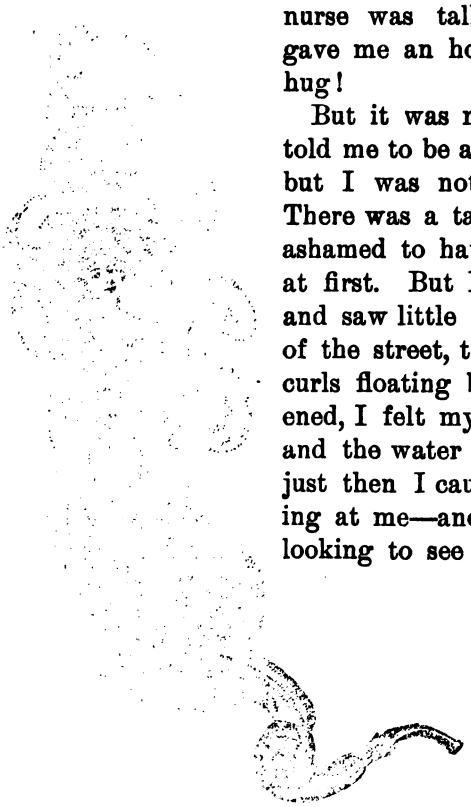
——Then they were all so kind, indoors! The cook made such nice things for my breakfast, because little master was going; Lilly *would* give me her seat by the fire, and would put her lump of sugar in my cup; and my mother looked so smiling, and so tenderly, that I thought I loved her more than I ever did before. Little Ben was so gay, too; and wanted me to take his jack-knife, if I wished it—though he knew that I had a brand new one in my trunk. The old nurse slipped a little purse into my hand, tied up with a green ribbon—with money in it—and told me not to show it to Ben or Lilly.

And cousin Isabel, who was there on a visit, would come to stand by my chair, when my mother was talking to me; and put her hand in mine, and look up into my face; but she did not say a word. I thought it was very odd; and yet it did not seem odd to me, that I could say nothing to her. I dare say we felt alike.



The Morning

At length Ben came running in, and said the coach had come; and there, sure enough, out of the window, we saw it—a bright yellow coach, with four white horses, and band-boxes all over the top, with a great pile of trunks behind. Ben said it was a grand coach, and that he should like a ride in it; and the old nurse came to the door, and said I should have a capital time; but somehow, I doubted if the nurse was talking honestly. I believe she gave me an honest kiss though—and such a hug!

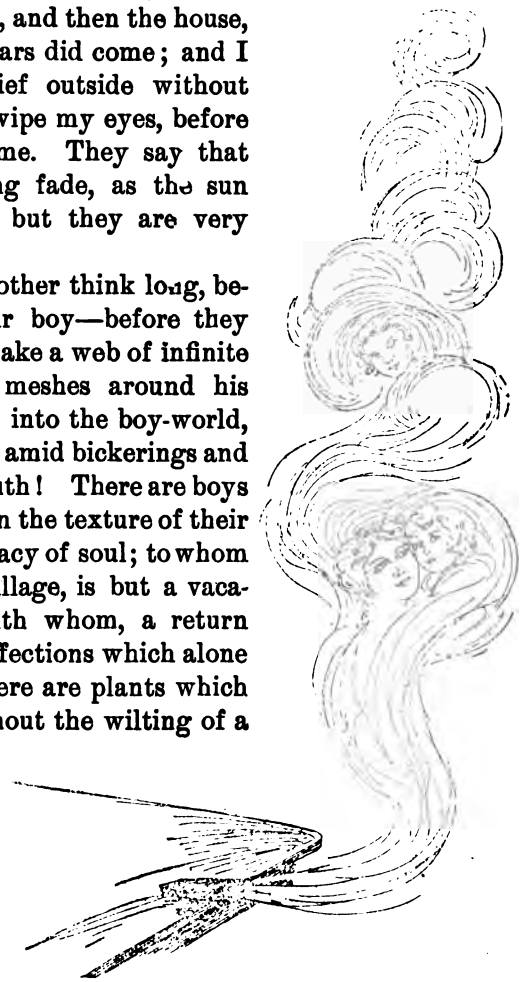


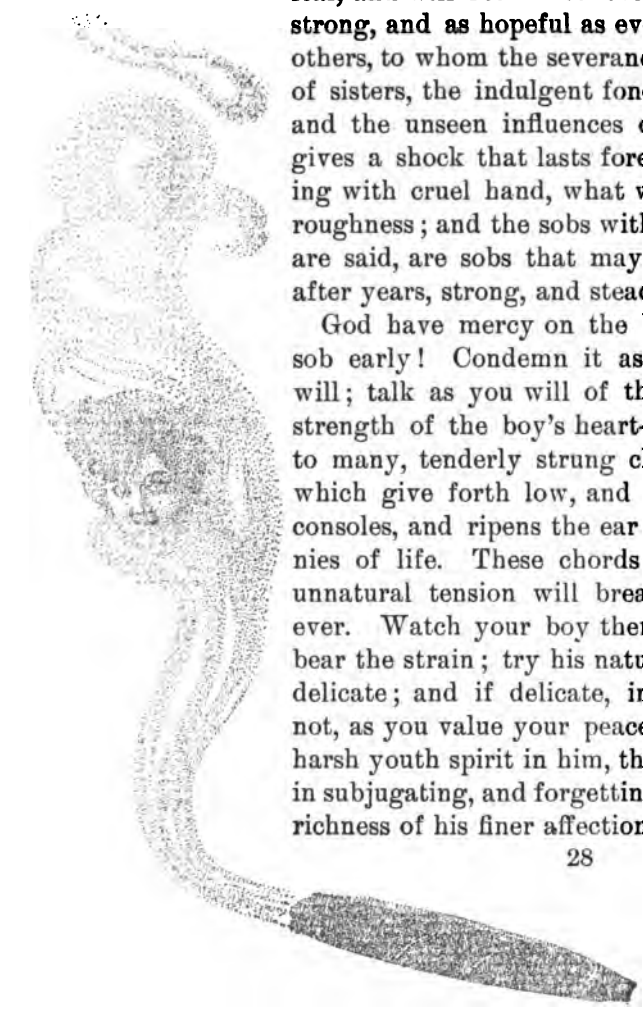
But it was nothing to my mother's. Tom told me to be a man, and study like a Trojan; but I was not thinking about study then. There was a tall boy in the coach, and I was ashamed to have him see me cry; so I didn't, at first. But I remember, as I looked back, and saw little Isabel run out into the middle of the street, to see the coach go off, and the curls floating behind her, as the wind freshened, I felt my heart leaping into my throat, and the water coming into my eyes, and how just then I caught sight of the tall boy glancing at me—and how I tried to turn it off, by looking to see if I could button up my great-

coat, a great deal lower down than the button-holes went.

But it was of no use; I put my head out of the coach window, and looked back, as the little figure of Isabel faded, and then the house, and the trees; and the tears did come; and I smuggled my handkerchief outside without turning; so that I could wipe my eyes, before the tall boy should see me. They say that these shadows of morning fade, as the sun brightens into noonday; but they are very dark shadows for all that!

Let the father, or the mother think long, before they send away their boy—before they break the home-ties that make a web of infinite fineness and soft silken meshes around his heart, and toss him aloof into the boy-world, where he must struggle up amid bickerings and quarrels, into his age of youth! There are boys indeed with little fineness in the texture of their hearts, and with little delicacy of soul; to whom the school in a distant village, is but a vacation from home; and with whom, a return revives all those grosser affections which alone existed before; just as there are plants which will bear all exposure without the wilting of a





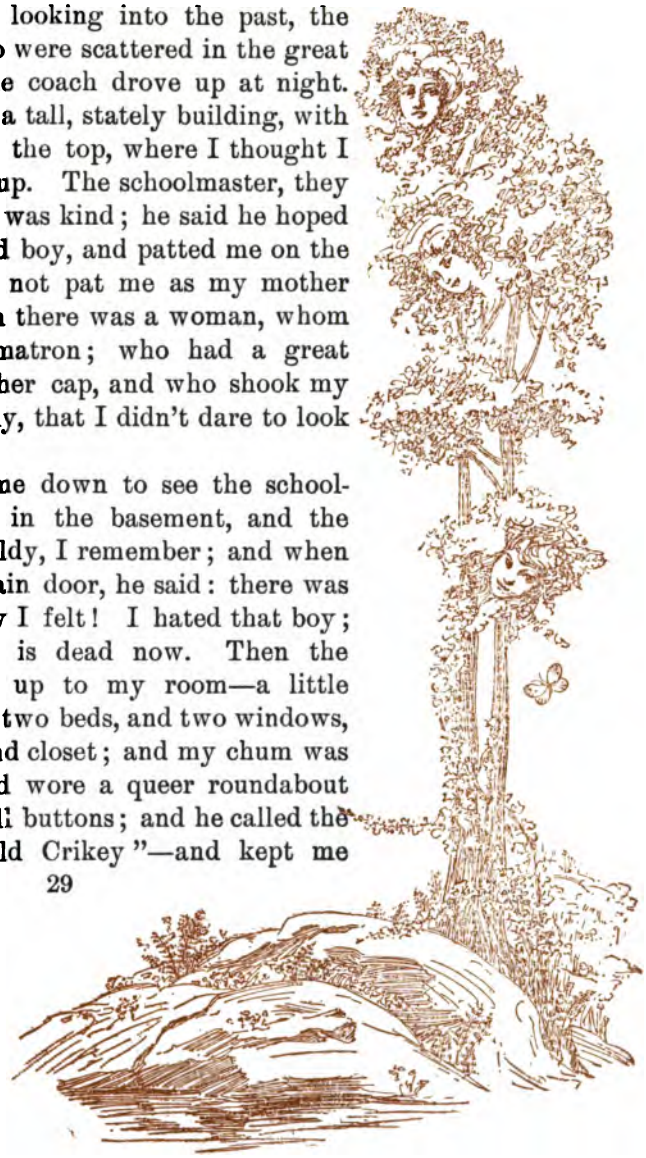
leaf, and will return to the hot-house life, as strong, and as hopeful as ever. But there are others, to whom the severance from the prattle of sisters, the indulgent fondness of a mother, and the unseen influences of the home altar, gives a shock that lasts forever; it is wrenching with cruel hand, what will bear but little roughness; and the sobs with which the adieux are said, are sobs that may come back in the after years, strong, and steady, and terrible.

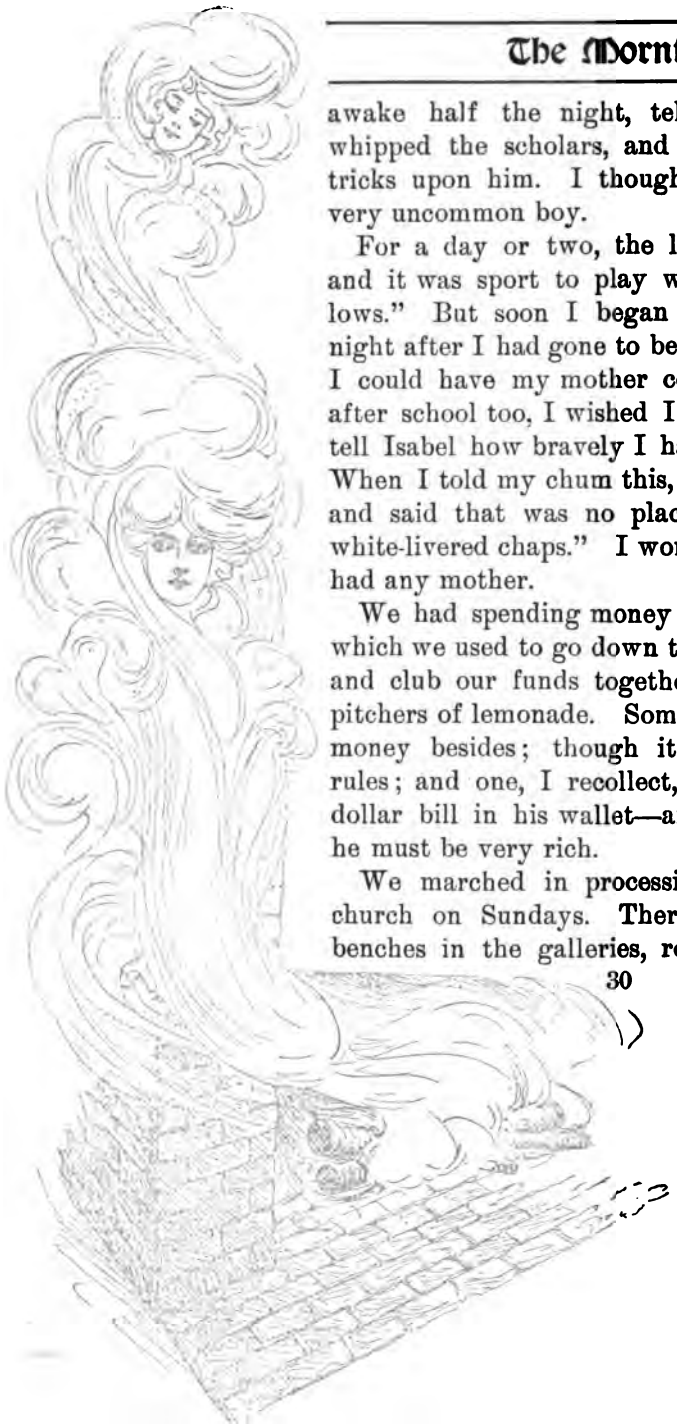
God have mercy on the boy who learns to sob early! Condemn it as sentiment, if you will; talk as you will of the fearlessness, and strength of the boy's heart—yet there belong to many, tenderly strung chords of affection which give forth low, and gentle music, that consoles, and ripens the ear for all the harmonies of life. These chords a little rude and unnatural tension will break, and break forever. Watch your boy then, if so be he will bear the strain; try his nature, if it be rude or delicate; and if delicate, in God's name, do not, as you value your peace and his, breed a harsh youth spirit in him, that shall take pride in subjugating, and forgetting the delicacy, and richness of his finer affections!

The Morning

——I see now, looking into the past, the troops of boys who were scattered in the great playground, as the coach drove up at night. The school was in a tall, stately building, with a high cupola on the top, where I thought I would like to go up. The schoolmaster, they told me at home, was kind; he said he hoped I would be a good boy, and patted me on the head; but he did not pat me as my mother used to do. Then there was a woman, whom they called the matron; who had a great many ribbons in her cap, and who shook my hand—but so stiffly, that I didn't dare to look up in her face.

One boy took me down to see the school-room, which was in the basement, and the walls were all moldy, I remember; and when we passed a certain door, he said: there was the dungeon; how I felt! I hated that boy; but I believe he is dead now. Then the matron took me up to my room—a little corner room, with two beds, and two windows, and a red table, and closet; and my chum was about my size, and wore a queer roundabout jacket with big bell buttons; and he called the schoolmaster—"Old Crikey"—and kept me





awake half the night, telling me how he whipped the scholars, and how they played tricks upon him. I thought my chum was a very uncommon boy.

For a day or two, the lessons were easy, and it was sport to play with so many "fellows." But soon I began to feel lonely at night after I had gone to bed. I used to wish I could have my mother come, and kiss me; after school too, I wished I could step in, and tell Isabel how bravely I had got my lessons. When I told my chum this, he laughed at me, and said that was no place for "homesick, white-livered chaps." I wondered if my chum had any mother.

We had spending money once a week, with which we used to go down to the village store, and club our funds together, to make great pitchers of lemonade. Some boys would have money besides; though it was against the rules; and one, I recollect, showed us a five dollar bill in his wallet—and we all thought he must be very rich.

We marched in procession to the village church on Sundays. There were two long benches in the galleries, reaching down the

sides of the meeting-house; and on these we sat. At the first, I was among the smallest boys, and took a place close to the wall, against the pulpit; but afterwards, as I grew bigger, I was promoted to the lower end of the first bench. This I never liked; because it was close by one of the ushers, and because it brought me next to some country women, who wore stiff bonnets, and eat fennel, and sung with the choir. But there was a little black-eyed girl, who sat over behind the choir, that I thought handsome; I used to look at her very often; but was careful she should never catch my eye.

There was another down below, in a corner pew, who was pretty; and who wore a hat in the winter trimmed with fur. Half the boys in the school said they would marry her some day or other. One's name was Jane, and that of the other, Sophia; which we thought pretty names, and cut them on the ice, in skating time. But I didn't think either of them so pretty as Isabel.

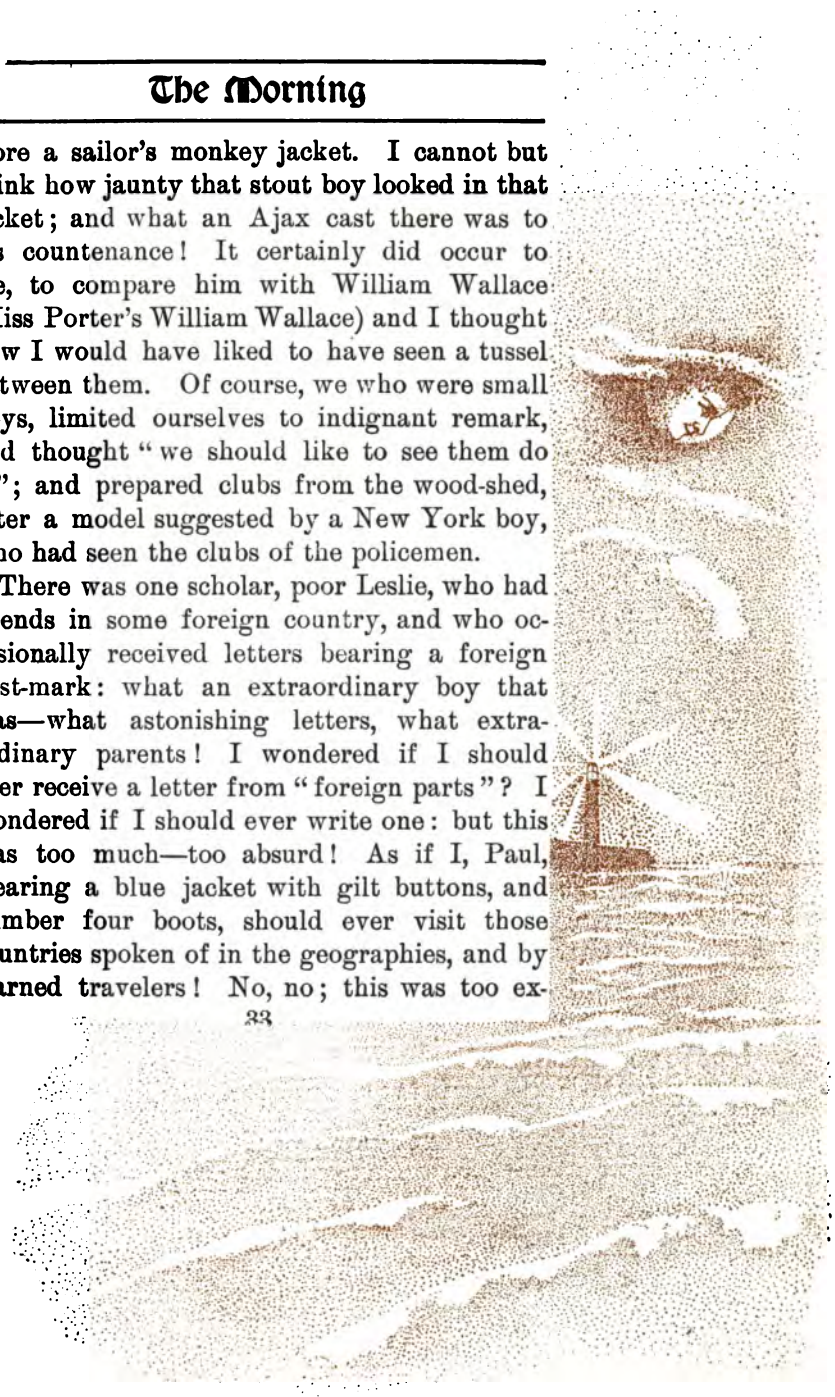
Once a teacher whipped me: I bore it bravely in the school: but afterwards, at night, when my chum was asleep, I sobbed bitterly

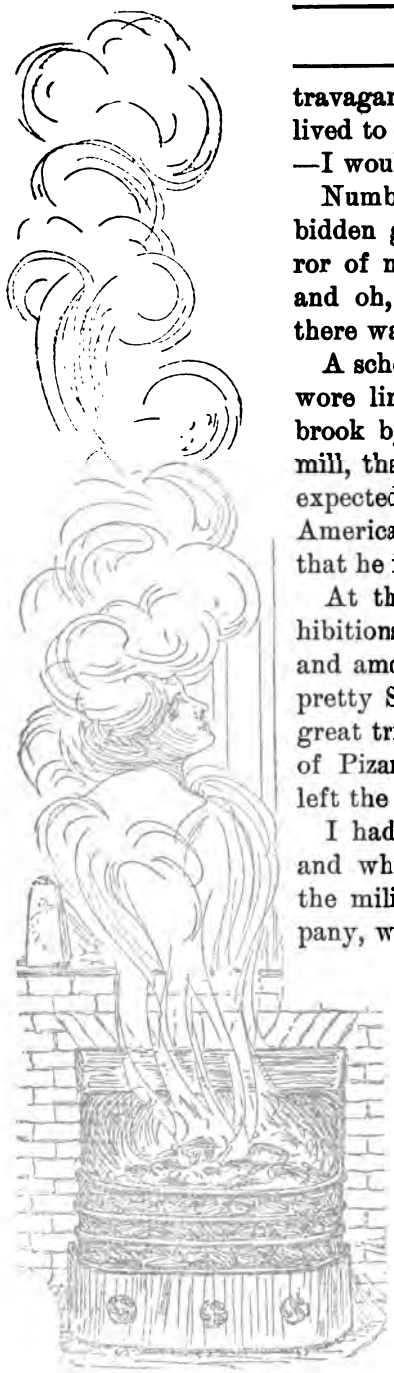
as I thought of Isabel, and Ben, and my mother, and how much they loved me: and laying my face in my hands, I sobbed myself to sleep. In the morning I was calm enough: it was another of the heart ties broken, though I did not know it then. It lessened the old attachment to home, because that home could neither protect me, nor soothe me with its sympathies. Memory indeed freshened and grew strong; but strong in bitterness, and in regrets. The boy whose love you cannot feed by daily nourishment, will find pride, self-indulgence, and an iron purpose coming in to furnish other supply for the soul that is in him. If he cannot shoot his branches into the sunshine, he will become acclimated to the shadow, and indifferent to such stray gleams of sunshine, as his fortune may vouchsafe.

Hostilities would sometimes threaten between the school and the village boys; but they usually passed off, with such loud, and harmless explosions as belong to the wars of our small politicians. The village champions were a hatter's apprentice, and a thickset fellow who worked in a tannery. We prided ourselves especially on one stout boy, who

wore a sailor's monkey jacket. I cannot but think how jaunty that stout boy looked in that jacket; and what an Ajax cast there was to his countenance! It certainly did occur to me, to compare him with William Wallace (Miss Porter's William Wallace) and I thought how I would have liked to have seen a tussel between them. Of course, we who were small boys, limited ourselves to indignant remark, and thought "we should like to see them do it"; and prepared clubs from the wood-shed, after a model suggested by a New York boy, who had seen the clubs of the policemen.

There was one scholar, poor Leslie, who had friends in some foreign country, and who occasionally received letters bearing a foreign post-mark: what an extraordinary boy that was—what astonishing letters, what extraordinary parents! I wondered if I should ever receive a letter from "foreign parts"? I wondered if I should ever write one: but this was too much—too absurd! As if I, Paul, wearing a blue jacket with gilt buttons, and number four boots, should ever visit those countries spoken of in the geographies, and by learned travelers! No, no; this was too ex-





travagant: but I knew what I would do, if I lived to come of age: and I vowed that I would —I would go to New York!

Number seven was the hospital, and forbidden ground; we had all of us a sort of horror of number seven. A boy died there once, and oh, how he moaned; and what a time there was when the father came!

A scholar by the name of Tom Belton, who wore linsey gray, made a dam across a little brook by the school, and whittled out a sawmill, that actually sawed: he had genius. I expected to see him before now at the head of American mechanics; but I learn with pain, that he is keeping a grocery store.

At the close of all the terms we had exhibitions, to which all the townspeople came, and among them the black-eyed Jane, and the pretty Sophia with fur around her hat. My great triumph was when I had the part of one of Pizarro's chieftains, the evening before I left the school. How I did look!

I had a mustache put on with burned cork, and whiskers very bushy indeed; and I had the militia coat of an ensign in the town company, with the skirts pinned up, and a short

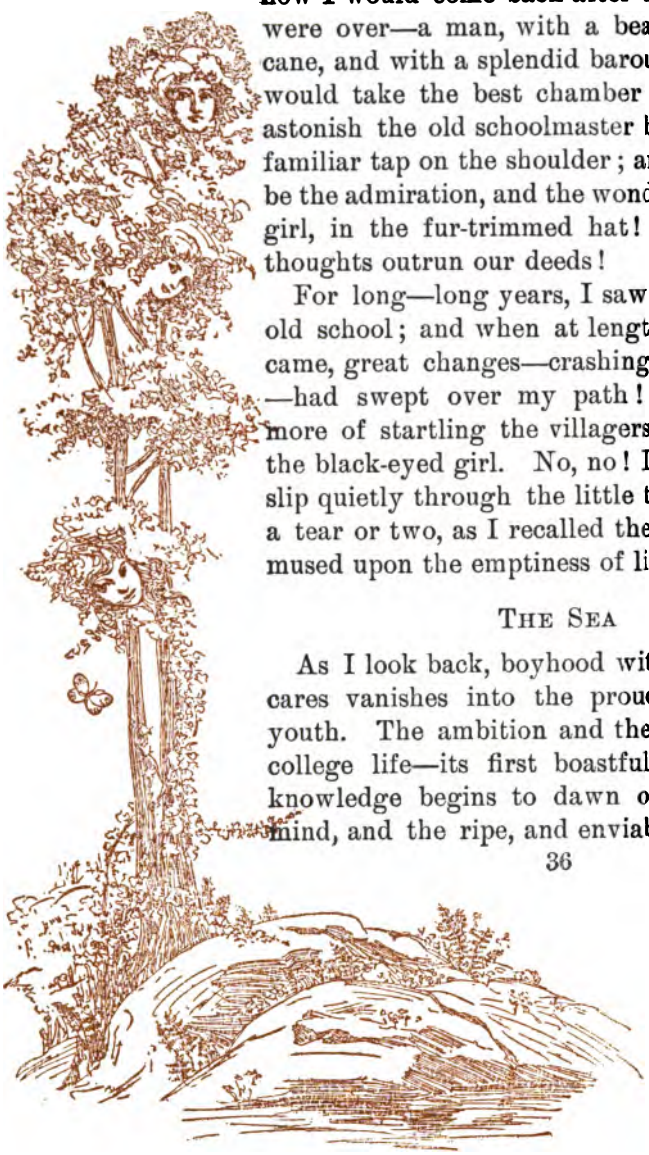
sword very dull, and crooked, which belonged to an old gentleman who was said to have got it from some privateer, who was said to have taken it from some great British admiral, in the old wars: and the way I carried that sword upon the platform and the way I jerked it out, when it came to my turn to say—"Battle! battle!—then death to the armed, and chains for the defenseless!"—was tremendous!

The morning after, in our dramatic hats—black felt, with turkey feathers—we took our place upon the top of the coach to leave the school. The head master, in green spectacles, came out to shake hands with us—a very awful shaking of hands.

Poor gentleman!—he is in his grave now.

We gave three loud hurrahs "for the old school," as the coach started; and upon the top of the hill that overlooks the village, we gave another round—and still another for the crabbed old fellow, whose apples we had so often stolen. I wonder if old Bulkeley is living yet?

As we got on under the pine trees, I recalled the image of the black-eyed Jane, and of the other little girl in the corner pew—and thought



how I would come back after the college days were over—a man, with a beaver hat, and a cane, and with a splendid barouche, and how I would take the best chamber at the inn, and astonish the old schoolmaster by giving him a familiar tap on the shoulder; and how I would be the admiration, and the wonder of the pretty girl, in the fur-trimmed hat! Alas, how our thoughts outrun our deeds!

For long—long years, I saw no more of my old school; and when at length the new view came, great changes—crashing like tornadoes—had swept over my path! I thought no more of startling the villagers, or astonishing the black-eyed girl. No, no! I was content to slip quietly through the little town, with only a tear or two, as I recalled the dead ones, and mused upon the emptiness of life!

The Sea

As I look back, boyhood with its griefs and cares vanishes into the proud stateliness of youth. The ambition and the rivalries of the college life—its first boastful importance as knowledge begins to dawn on the wakened mind, and the ripe, and enviable complacency

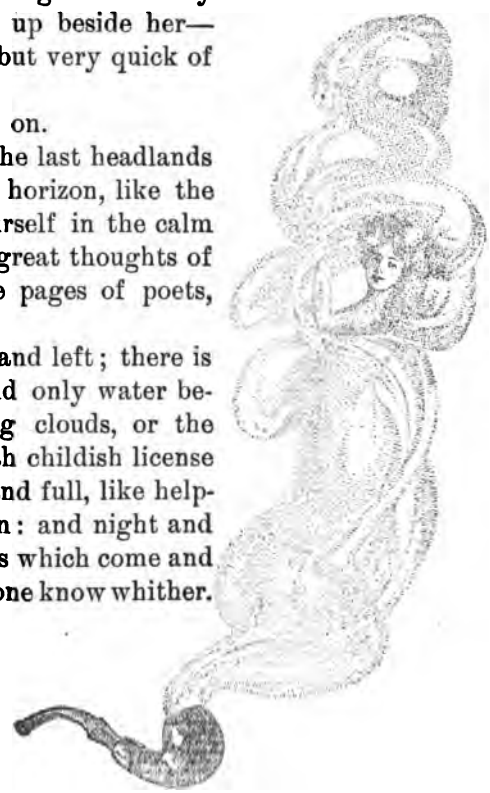
of its senior dignity—all scud over my memory, like this morning breeze along the meadows; and like that too, bear upon their wing, a chillness—as of distant ice-banks.

Ben has grown almost to manhood; Lilly is living in a distant home; and Isabel is just blooming into that sweet age, where womanly dignity waits her beauty; an age that sorely puzzles one who has grown up beside her—making him slow of tongue, but very quick of heart.

As for the rest—let us pass on.

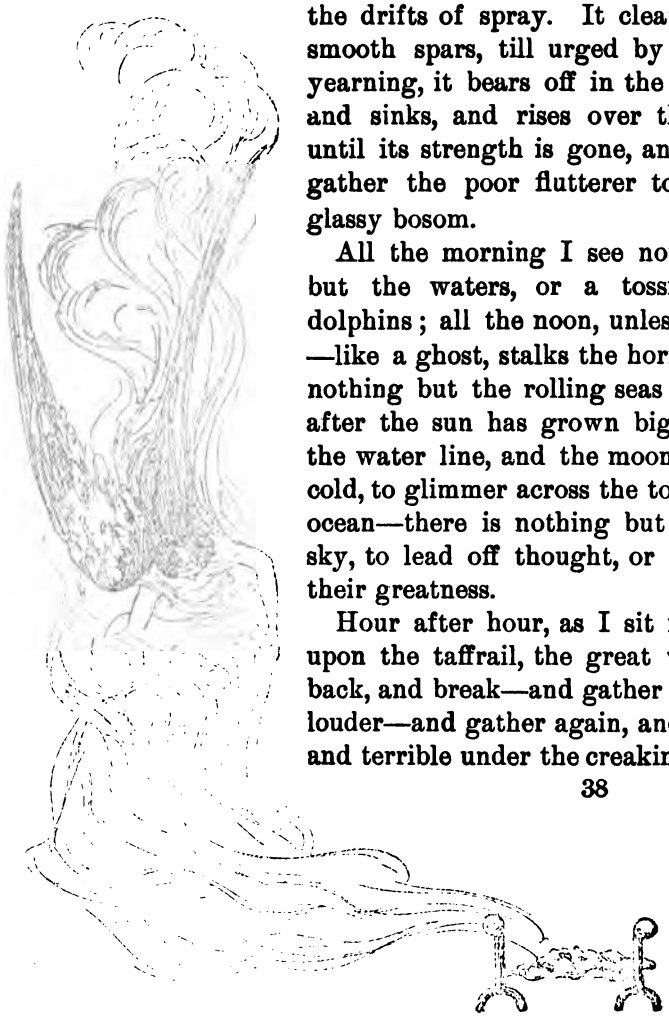
The sea is around me. The last headlands have gone down under the horizon, like the city steeples, as you lose yourself in the calm of the country, or like the great thoughts of genius, as you slip from the pages of poets, into your own quiet reverie.

The waters skirt me right and left; there is nothing but water before, and only water behind. Above me are sailing clouds, or the blue vault, which we call, with childish license—heaven. The sails, white and full, like helping friends are pushing me on: and night and day are distant with the winds which come and go—none know whence, and none know whither.



The Morning

A land bird flutters aloft, weary with long flying; and lost in a world where are no forests but the careening masts, and no foliage but the drifts of spray. It cleaves awhile to the smooth spars, till urged by some homeward yearning, it bears off in the face of the wind, and sinks, and rises over the angry waters, until its strength is gone, and the blue waves gather the poor flutterer to their cold, and glassy bosom.



All the morning I see nothing beyond me but the waters, or a tossing company of dolphins; all the noon, unless some white sail —like a ghost, stalks the horizon, there is still nothing but the rolling seas; all the evening, after the sun has grown big and sunk under the water line, and the moon risen, white and cold, to glimmer across the tops of the surging ocean—there is nothing but the sea, and the sky, to lead off thought, or to crush it with their greatness.

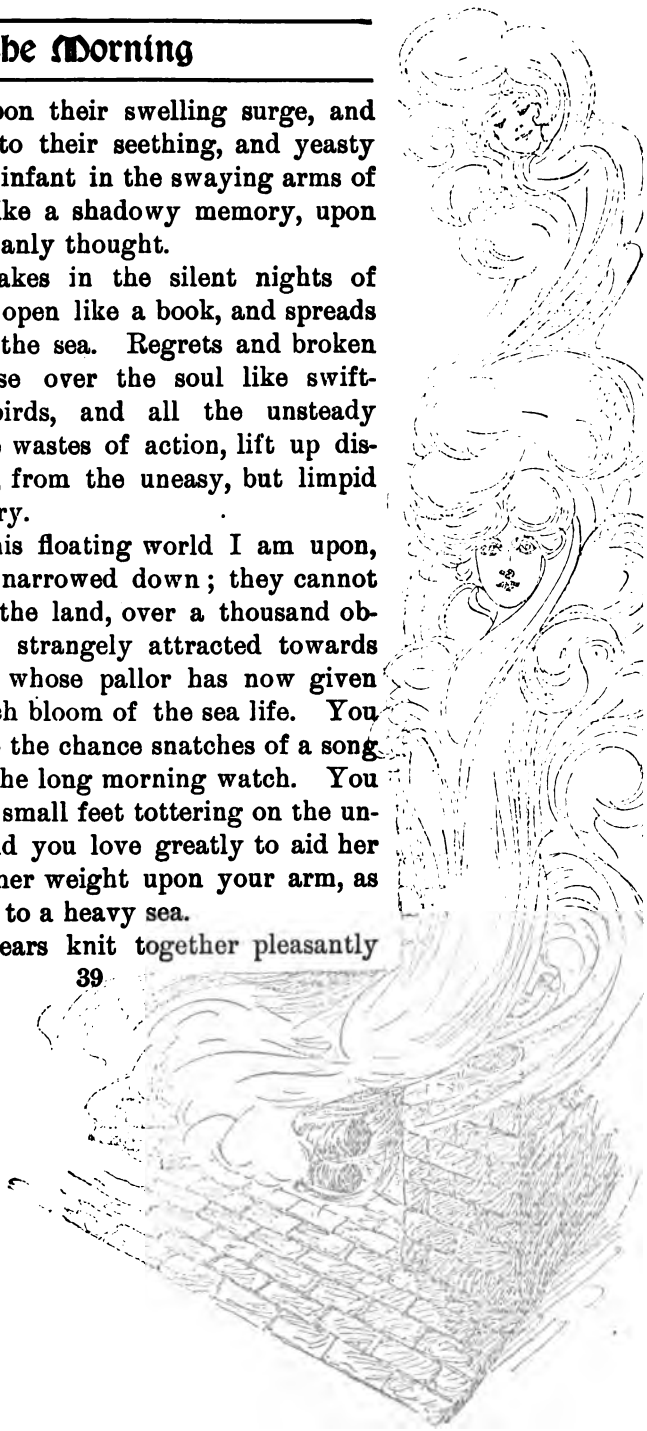
Hour after hour, as I sit in the moonlight upon the taffrail, the great waves gather far back, and break—and gather nearer, and break louder—and gather again, and roll down swift and terrible under the creaking ship, and heave

it up lightly upon their swelling surge, and drop it gently to their seething, and yeasty cradle—like an infant in the swaying arms of a mother—or like a shadowy memory, upon the billows of manly thought.

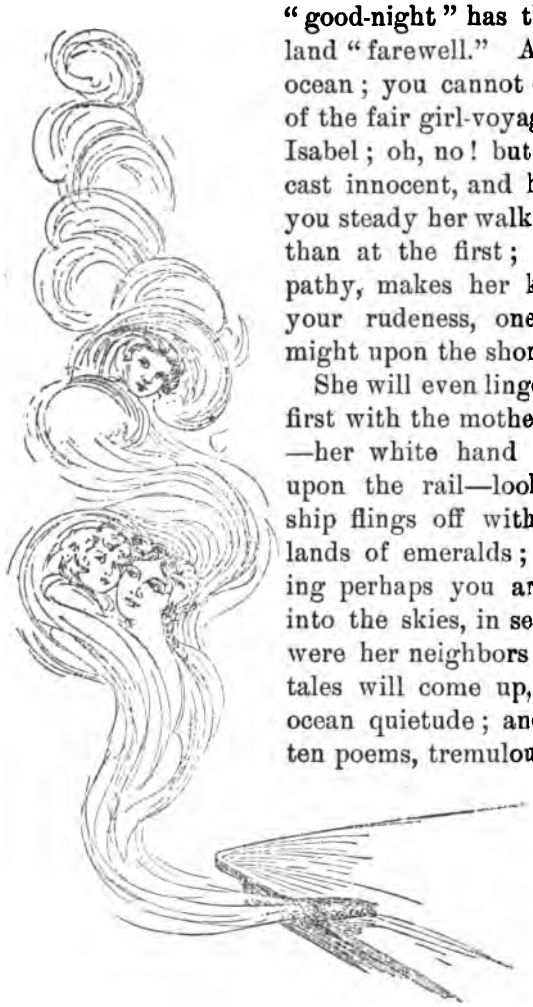
Conscience wakes in the silent nights of ocean; life lies open like a book, and spreads out as level as the sea. Regrets and broken resolutions chase over the soul like swift-winged night-birds, and all the unsteady heights and the wastes of action, lift up distinct, and clear, from the uneasy, but limpid depths of memory.

Yet within this floating world I am upon, sympathies are narrowed down; they cannot range, as upon the land, over a thousand objects. You are strangely attracted towards some frail girl, whose pallor has now given place to the rich bloom of the sea life. You listen eagerly to the chance snatches of a song from below, in the long morning watch. You love to see her small feet tottering on the unsteady deck; and you love greatly to aid her steps, and feel her weight upon your arm, as the ship lurches to a heavy sea.

Hopes and fears knit together pleasantly



upon the ocean. Each day seems to revive them; your morning salutation, is like a welcome after absence, upon the shore; and each "good-night" has the depth and fullness of a land "farewell." And beauty grows upon the ocean; you cannot certainly say that the face of the fair girl-voyager is prettier than that of Isabel; oh, no! but you are certain that you cast innocent, and honest glances upon her as you steady her walk upon the deck, far oftener than at the first; and ocean life, and sympathy, makes her kind; she does not resent your rudeness, one-half so stoutly, as she might upon the shore.



She will even linger of an evening—pleading first with the mother, and standing beside you—her white hand not very far from yours upon the rail—look down where the black ship flings off with each plunge, whole garlands of emeralds; or she will look up (thinking perhaps you are looking the same way) into the skies, in search of some stars—which were her neighbors at home. And bits of old tales will come up, as if they rode upon the ocean quietude; and fragments of half-forgotten poems, tremulously uttered—either by rea-

son of the rolling of the ship, or some accidental touch of that white hand.

But ocean has its storms, when fear will make strange, and holy companionship; and even here my memory shifts swiftly and suddenly.

——It is a dreadful night. The passengers are clustered, trembling, below. Every plank shakes; and the oak ribs groan, as if they suffered with their toil. The hands are all aloft; the captain is forward shouting to the mate in the cross-trees, and I am clinging to one of the stanchions, by the binnacle. The ship is pitching madly, and the waves are toppling up, sometimes as high as the yard-arm, and then dipping away with a whirl under our keel, that makes every timber in the vessel quiver. The thunder is roaring like a thousand cannons; and at the moment, the sky is cleft with a stream of fire, that glares over the tops of the waves, and glistens on the wet decks and the spars—lighting up all so plain, that I can see the men's faces in the main-top, and catch glimpses of the reefers on the yard-arm, clinging like death; then all is horrible darkness.

The spray spits angrily against the canvas;

the waves crash against the weather-bow like mountains, the wind howls through the rigging, or, as a gasket gives way, the sail bellying to leeward, splits like the crack of a musket. I hear the captain in the lulls, screaming out orders; and the mate in the rigging, screaming them over, until the lightning comes, and the thunder, deadening their voices, as if they were chirping sparrows.

In one of the flashes, I see a hand upon the yard-arm lose his foothold, as the ship gives a plunge; but his arms are clinched around the spar. Before I can see any more, the blackness comes, and the thunder, with a crash that half deafens me. I think I hear a low cry, as the mutterings die away in the distance; and the next flash of lightning, which comes in an instant, I see upon the top of one of the waves alongside, the poor reefer who has fallen. The lightning glares upon his face.

But he has caught at a loose bit of running rigging, as he fell; and I see it slipping off the coil upon the deck. I shout madly—man overboard!—and—catch the rope, when I can see nothing again. The sea is too high, and the man too heavy for me. I shout, and shout,

and shout, and feel the perspiration starting in great beads from my forehead, as the line slips through my fingers.

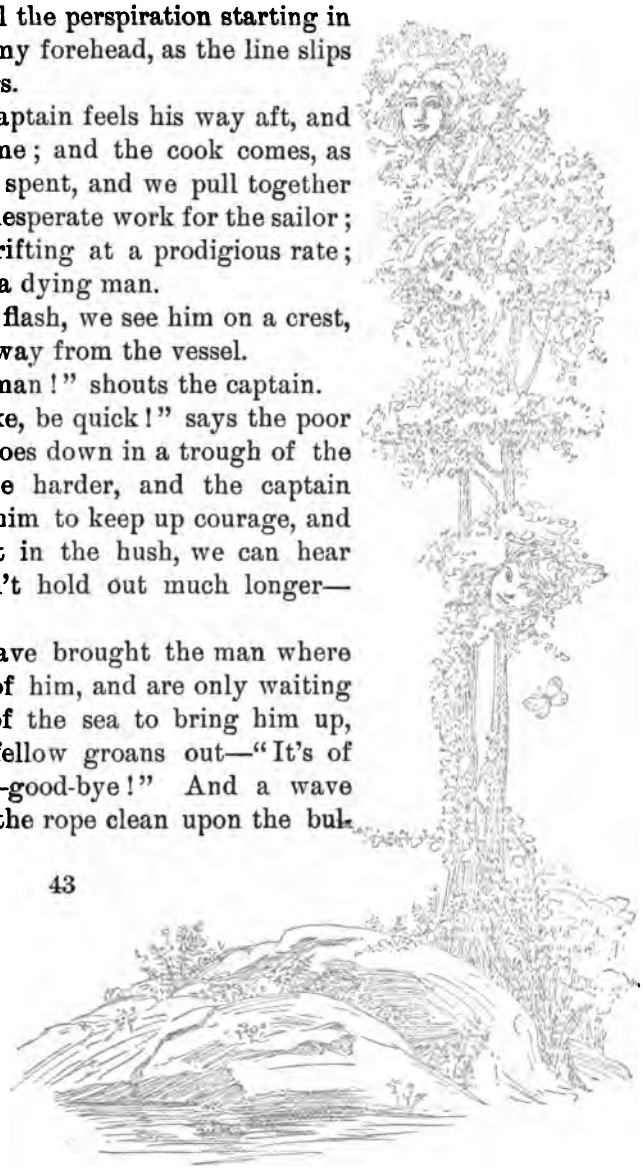
Presently the captain feels his way aft, and takes hold with me; and the cook comes, as the coil is nearly spent, and we pull together upon him. It is desperate work for the sailor; for the ship is drifting at a prodigious rate; but he clings like a dying man.

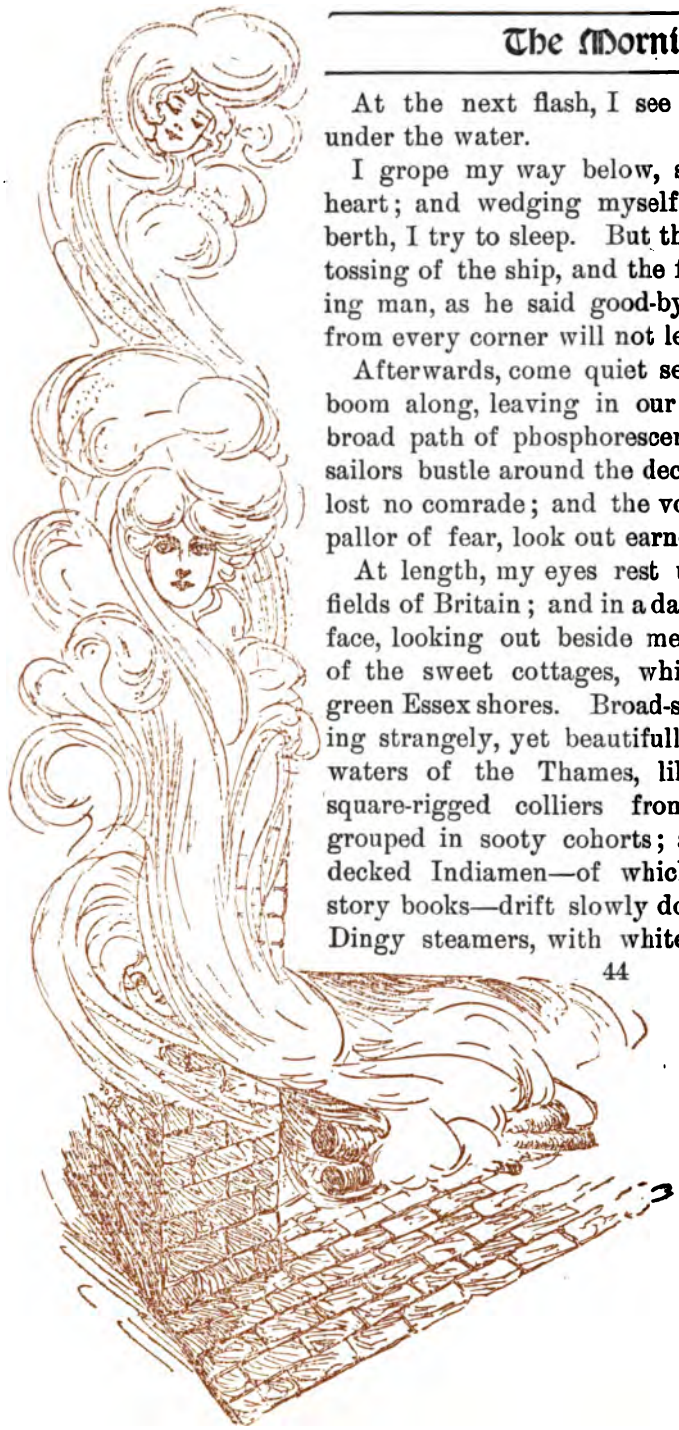
By and by at a flash, we see him on a crest, two oars length away from the vessel.

"Hold on, my man!" shouts the captain.

"For God's sake, be quick!" says the poor fellow; and he goes down in a trough of the sea. We pull the harder, and the captain keeps calling to him to keep up courage, and hold strong. But in the hush, we can hear him say—"I can't hold out much longer—I'm most gone!"

Presently we have brought the man where we can lay hold of him, and are only waiting for a good lift of the sea to bring him up, when the poor fellow groans out—"It's of no use—I can't—good-bye!" And a wave tosses the end of the rope clean upon the bulwarks.





The Morning

At the next flash, I see him going down under the water.

I grope my way below, sick and faint at heart; and wedging myself into my narrow berth, I try to sleep. But the thunder and the tossing of the ship, and the face of the drowning man, as he said good-bye—peering at me from every corner will not let me sleep.

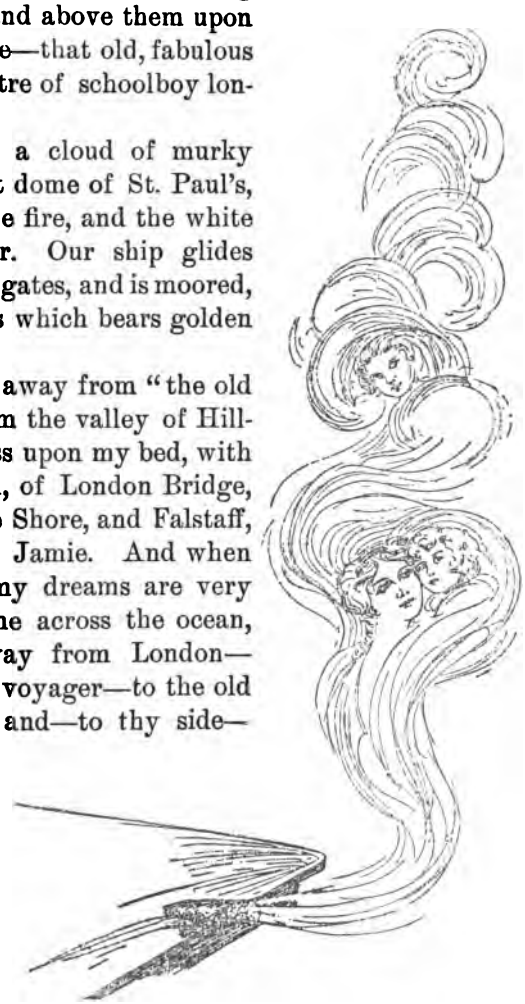
Afterwards, come quiet seas, over which we boom along, leaving in our track, at night, a broad path of phosphorescent splendor. The sailors bustle around the decks, as if they had lost no comrade; and the voyagers losing the pallor of fear, look out earnestly for the land.

At length, my eyes rest upon the coveted fields of Britain; and in a day more, the bright face, looking out beside me, sparkles at sight of the sweet cottages, which lie along the green Essex shores. Broad-sailed yachts, looking strangely, yet beautifully, glide upon the waters of the Thames, like swans; black, square-rigged colliers from the Tyne, lie grouped in sooty cohorts; and heavy, three-decked Indiamen—of which I had read in story books—drift slowly down with the tide. Dingy steamers, with white pipes, and with

red pipes, whiz past us to the sea, and now, my eye rests on the great palace of Greenwich; I see the wooden-legged pensioners smoking under the palace walls; and above them upon the hill—as Heaven is true—that old, fabulous Greenwich, the great centre of schoolboy longitude.

Presently, from under a cloud of murky smoke heaves up the vast dome of St. Paul's, and the tall column of the fire, and the white turrets of London Tower. Our ship glides through the massive dock gates, and is moored, amid the forest of masts which bears golden fruit for Britons.

That night, I sleep far away from "the old school," and far away from the valley of Hill-farm; long, and late, I toss upon my bed, with sweet visions in my mind, of London Bridge, and Temple Bar, and Jane Shore, and Falstaff, and Prince Hal, and King Jamie. And when at length I fall asleep my dreams are very pleasant, but they carry me across the ocean, away from the ship—away from London—away even from the fair voyager—to the old oaks, and to the brooks, and—to thy side—sweet Isabel!



The Father-Land

There is a great contrast between the easy deshabille of the ocean life, and the prim attire, and conventional spirit of the land. In the first, there are but few to please, and these few are known, and they know us; upon the shore, there is a world to humor, and a world of strangers. In a brilliant drawing-room looking out upon the sight of old Charing Cross, and upon the one-armed Nelson, standing aloft at his coil of rope, I take leave of the fair voyager of the sea. Her white negligee has given place to silks; and the simple careless coiffe of the ocean, is replaced by the rich dressing of a modiste. Yet her face has the same bloom upon it; and her eye sparkles, as it seems to me, with a higher pride; and her little hand has I think a tremulous quiver in it (I am sure my own has)—as I bid her adieu, and take up the trail of my wanderings into the heart of England.

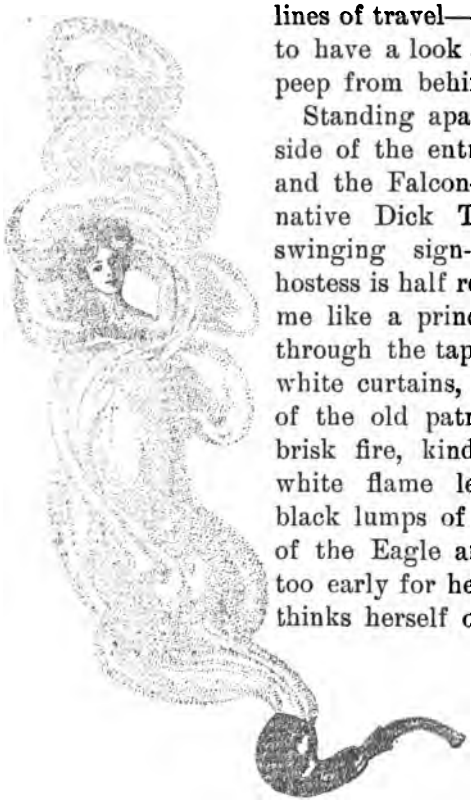
Abuse her, as we will—pity her starving peasantry, as we may—smile at her court pageantry, as much as we like—old England, is dear old England still. Her cottage homes, her green fields, her castles, her blazing fire-

sides, her church spires are as old as songs; and by song and story, we inherit them in our hearts. This joyous boast, was, I remember, upon my lip, as I first trod upon the rich meadow of Runnymede; and recalled that GREAT CHARTER: wrested from the king, which made the first stepping stone towards the bounties of our western freedom.

It is a strange feeling that comes over the Western Saxon, as he strolls first along the green by-lanes of England, and scents the hawthorn in its April bloom, and lingers at some quaint stile. to watch the rooks wheeling and cawing around some lofty elm-tops, and traces the carved gables of some old country mansion that lies in their shadow, and hums some fragment of charming English poesy, that seems made for the scene. This is not sight-seeing, nor travel; it is dreaming sweet dreams, that are fed with the old life of Books.

I wander on, fearing to break the dream, by a swift step; and winding and rising between the blooming hedgerows, I come presently to the sight of some sweet valley below me, where a thatched hamlet lies sleeping in the April sun, as quietly as the dead lie in history;

no sound reaches me save the occasional clink of the smith's hammer, or the hedgeman's bill-hook, or the plowman's "ho-tup," from the hills. At evening, listening to the nightingale, I stroll wearily into some close-nestled village, that I had seen long ago from a rolling height. It is far away from the great lines of travel—and the children stop their play to have a look at me, and the rosy-faced girls peep from behind half opened doors.



Standing apart, and with a bench on either side of the entrance, is the inn of the Eagle and the Falcon—which guardian birds, some native Dick Tinto has pictured upon the swinging sign-board at the corner. The hostess is half ready to embrace me, and treats me like a prince in disguise. She shows me through the tap-room into a little parlor, with white curtains, and with neatly framed prints of the old patriarchs. Here, alone beside a brisk fire, kindled with furze, I watch the white flame leaping playfully through the black lumps of coal, and enjoy the best fare of the Eagle and the Falcon. If too late, or too early for her garden stock, the hostess bethinks herself of some small pot of jelly in an

out-of-the-way cupboard of the house, and setting it temptingly in her prettiest dish, she coyly slips it upon the white cloth, with a modest regret that it is no better; and a little evident satisfaction—that it is so good.

I muse for an hour before the glowing fire, as quiet as the cat that has come in, to bear me company; and at bedtime, I find sheets, as fresh as the air of the mountains.

At another time, and many months later, I am walking under a wood of Scottish firs. It is near nightfall, and the fir tops are swaying, and sighing hoarsely, in the cool wind of the Northern Highlands. There is none of the smiling landscape of England about me; and the crags of Edinburgh and Castle Stirling, and sweet Perth, in its silver valley, are far to the southward. The larches of Athol and Bruar Water, and that highland gem—Dunkeld, are passed. I am tired with a morning's tramp over Culloden Moor; and from the edge of the wood, there stretches before me in the cool gray twilight, broad fields of heather. In the middle, there rise against the night-sky, the turrets of a castle; it is Castle Cawdor, where King Duncan was murdered by Macbeth.

The sight of it lends a spur to my weary step; and emerging from the wood, I bound over the springy heather. In an hour, I clamber a broken wall, and come under the frowning shadows of the castle. The ivy clambers up here, and there, and shakes its uncropped branches, and its dried berries over the heavy portal. I cross the moat, and my step makes the chains of the draw-bridge rattle. All is kept in the old state; only in lieu of the warder's horn, I pull at the warder's bell. The echoes ring, and die in the stone courts; but there is no one astir, nor is there a light at any of the castle windows. I ring again, and the echoes come, and blend with the rising night wind that sighs around the turrets, as they sighed that night of murder. I fancy—it must be a fancy—that I hear an owl scream; I am sure that I hear the crickets cry.

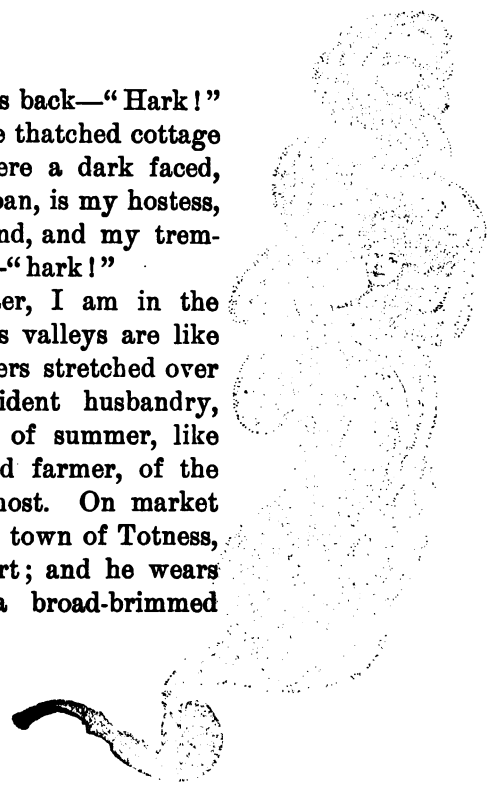
I sit down upon the green bank of the moat; a little dark water lies in the bottom. The walls rise from it gray, and stern in the deepening shadows. I hum chance passages of Macbeth, listening for the echoes—echoes from the wall; and echoes from that far away

time, when I stole the first reading of the tragic story.

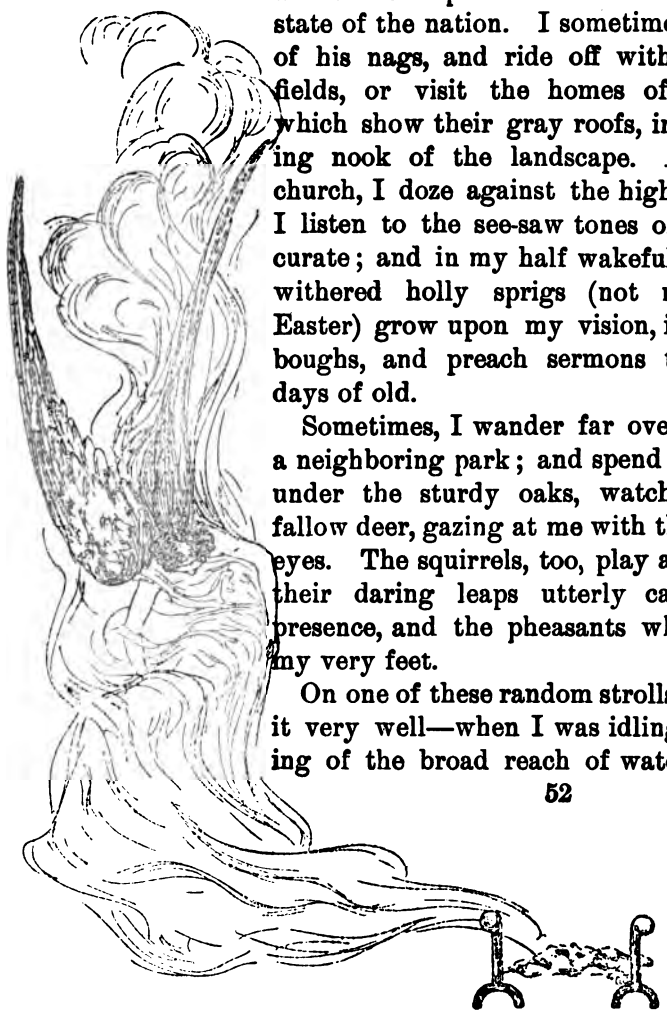
"Did'st thou not hear a noise?
I heard the owl scream, and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?
When?
Now.
As I descended?
Ay.
——Hark!"

And the sharp echo comes back—"Hark!" And at dead of night, in the thatched cottage under the castle walls, where a dark faced, Gaelic woman, in plaid turban, is my hostess, I wake, startled by the wind, and my trembling lips say involuntarily—"hark!"

Again, three months later, I am in the sweet county of Devon. Its valleys are like emerald; its threads of waters stretched over the fields, by their provident husbandry, glisten in the broad glow of summer, like skeins of silk. A bland old farmer, of the true British stamp, is my host. On market days he rides over to the old town of Totness, in a trim, black farmer's cart; and he wears glossy-topped boots, and a broad-brimmed



white hat. I take a vast deal of pleasure in listening to his honest, straightforward talk about the improvements of the day and the state of the nation. I sometimes get upon one of his nags, and ride off with him over his fields, or visit the homes of the laborers, which show their gray roofs, in every charming nook of the landscape. At the parish church, I doze against the high pew backs, as I listen to the see-saw tones of the drawling curate; and in my half wakeful moments, the withered holly sprigs (not removed since Easter) grow upon my vision, into Christmas boughs, and preach sermons to me—of the days of old.

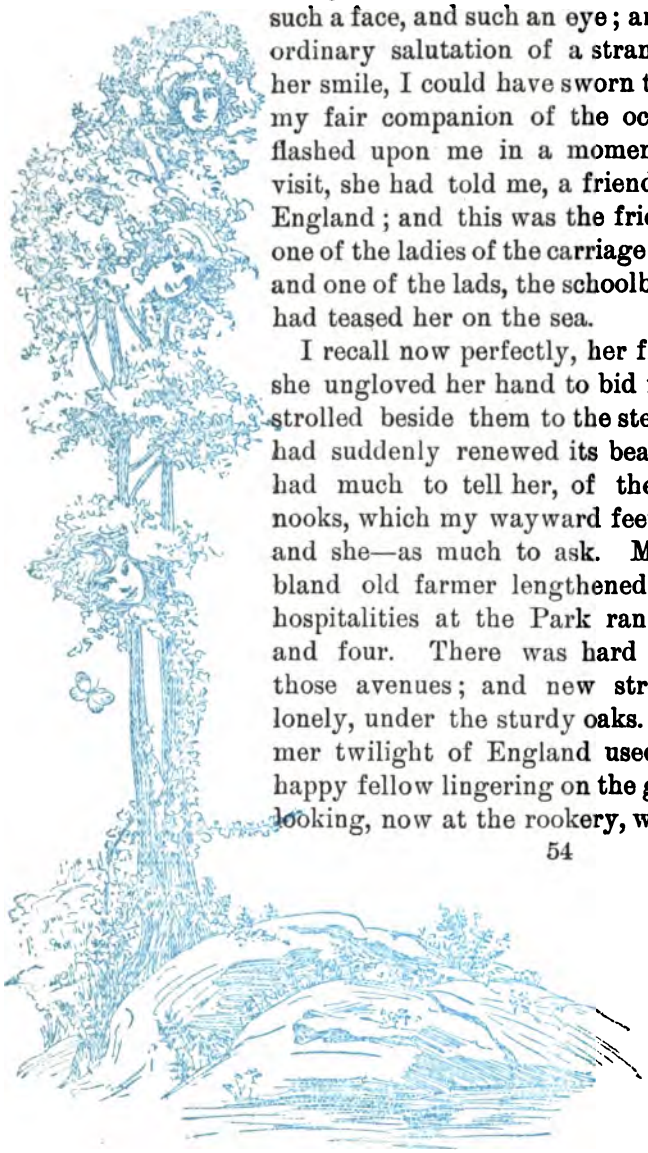


Sometimes, I wander far over the hills into a neighboring park; and spend hours on hours under the sturdy oaks, watching the sleek fallow deer, gazing at me with their soft liquid eyes. The squirrels, too, play above me, with their daring leaps utterly careless of my presence, and the pheasants whir away from my very feet.

On one of these random strolls—I remember it very well—when I was idling along, thinking of the broad reach of water that lay be-

tween me, and that old forest home—and beating off the daisy heads with my cane—I heard the tramp of horses coming up one of the forest avenues. The sound was unusual, for the family, I had been told, was still in town, and no right of way lay through the park. There they were, however: I was sure it must be the family, from the careless way in which they came sauntering up.

First, there was a noble hound that came bounding towards me—gazed a moment, and turned to watch the approach of the little cavalcade: Next was an elderly gentleman mounted upon a spirited hunter, attended by a boy of some dozen years, who managed his pony with a grace, that is a part of the English boy's education. Then followed two older lads, and a traveling phaeton in which sat a couple of elderly ladies. But what most drew my attention was a girlish figure, that rode beyond the carriage, upon a sleek-limbed gray. There was something in the easy grace of her attitude, and the rich glow that lit up her face—heightened as it was, by the little black riding cap, relieved with a single flowing plume—that kept my eye. It was strange, but I



thought that I had seen such a figure before, and such a face, and such an eye; and as I made the ordinary salutation of a stranger, and caught her smile, I could have sworn that it was she—my fair companion of the ocean. The truth flashed upon me in a moment. She was to visit, she had told me, a friend in the south of England; and this was the friend's home; and one of the ladies of the carriage was her mother; and one of the lads, the schoolboy brother, who had teased her on the sea.

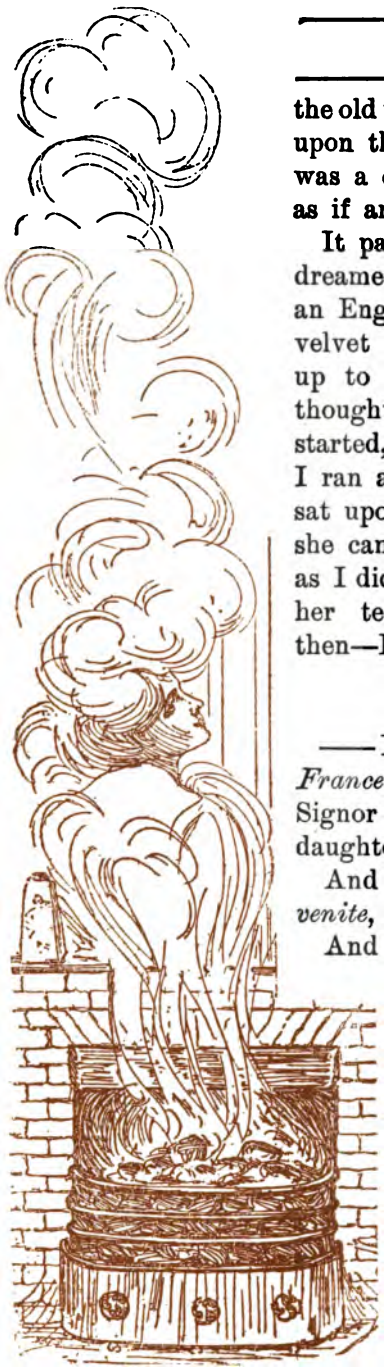
I recall now perfectly, her frank manner, as she ungloved her hand to bid me welcome. I strolled beside them to the steps. Old Devon had suddenly renewed its beauties for me. I had much to tell her, of the little outlying nooks, which my wayward feet had led me to: and she—as much to ask. My stay with the bland old farmer lengthened; and two days hospitalities at the Park ran over into three, and four. There was hard galloping down those avenues; and new strolls, not at all lonely, under the sturdy oaks. The long summer twilight of England used to find a very happy fellow lingering on the garden terrace—looking, now at the rookery, where the belated

birds quarreled for a resting place, and now down the long forest vista, gray with distance, and closed with the white spire of Madbury church.

English country life gains fast upon one—very fast; and it is not so easy, as in the drawing-room of Charing Cross, to say—adieu! But it is said—very sadly said; for God only knows how long it is to last. And as I rode slowly down towards the lodge after my leave-taking, I turned back again, and again, and again. I thought I saw her standing still upon the terrace, though it was almost dark; and I thought—it could hardly have been an illusion—that I saw something white waving from her hand.

Her name—as if I could forget it—was Caroline; her mother called her—Carry. I wondered how it would seem for me to call her—Carry! I tried it—it sounded well. I tried it—over and over—until I came too near the lodge. There I threw a half crown to the woman who opened the gate for me. She courtesied low, and said—"God bless you, sir!"

I liked her for it; I would have given a guinea for it: and that night—whether it was



the old woman's benediction, or the waving scarf upon the terrace, I do not know—but there was a charm upon my thought, and my hope, as if an angel had been near me.

It passed away though in my dreams; for I dreamed that I saw the sweet face of Bella in an English park, and that she wore a black-velvet riding cap, with a plume; and I came up to her and murmured, very sweetly, I thought—"Carry, dear Carry!" and she started, looked sadly at me, and turned away. I ran after her to kiss her, as I did when she sat upon my mother's lap, on the day when she came near drowning: I longed to tell her, as I did then—I *do* love you. But she turned her tearful face upon me, I dreamed; and then—I saw no more.

A Roman Girl

——I remember the very words—"*non parlo Francese, Signore*—I do not speak French, Signor"—said the stout lady—"but my daughter, perhaps, will understand you."

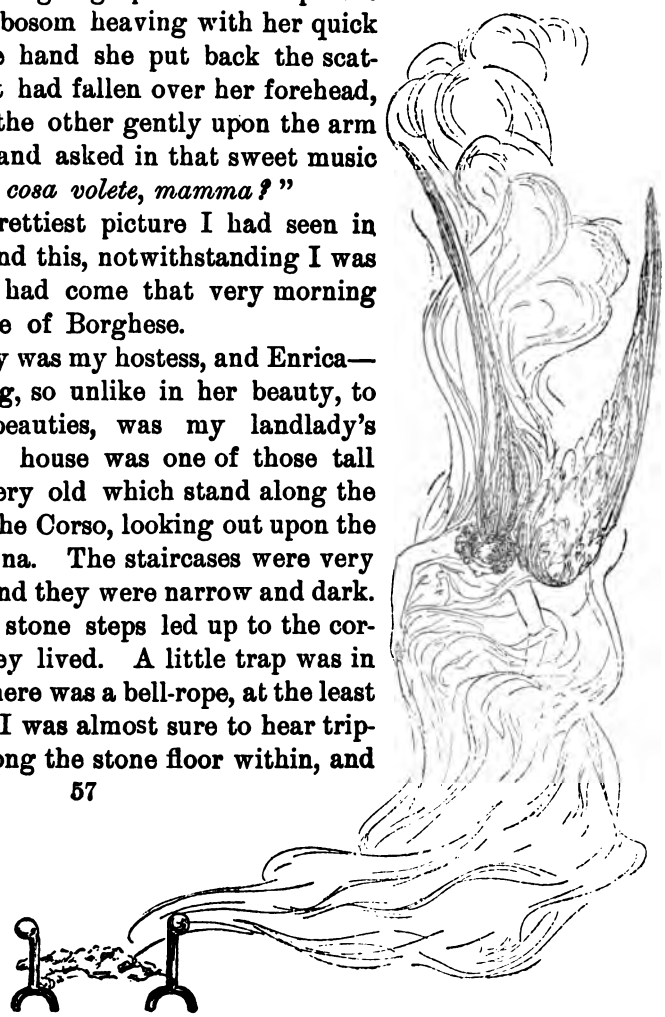
And she called out—"*Enrica!—Enrica! venite, subito! c' è un forestiere.*"

And the daughter came, her light-brown

hair falling carelessly over her shoulders, her rich, hazel eye twinkling and full of life, the color coming and going upon her transparent cheek, and her bosom heaving with her quick step. With one hand she put back the scattered locks that had fallen over her forehead, while she laid the other gently upon the arm of her mother, and asked in that sweet music of the south—"*cosa volete, mamma?*"

It was the prettiest picture I had seen in many a day; and this, notwithstanding I was in Rome, and had come that very morning from the Palace of Borghese.

The stout lady was my hostess, and Enrica—so fair, so young, so unlike in her beauty, to other Italian beauties, was my landlady's daughter. The house was one of those tall houses—very, very old which stand along the eastern side of the Corso, looking out upon the Piazzo di Colonna. The staircases were very tall, and dirty, and they were narrow and dark. Four flights of stone steps led up to the corridor where they lived. A little trap was in the door; and there was a bell-rope, at the least touch of which, I was almost sure to hear tripping feet run along the stone floor within, and



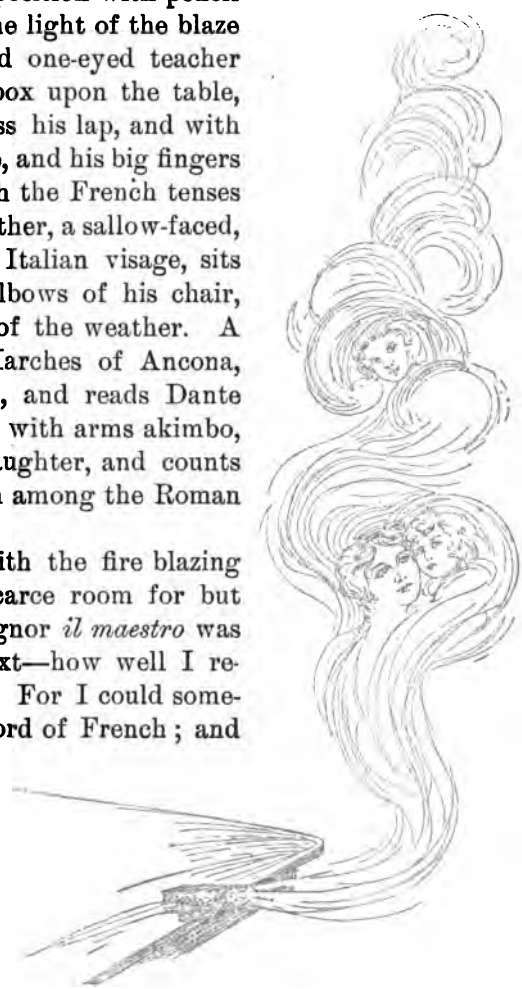
then to see the trap thrown slyly back, and those deep hazel eyes looking out upon me; and then the door would open, and along the corridor, under the daughter's guidance (until I had learned the way), I passed to my Roman home. I was a long time learning the way.

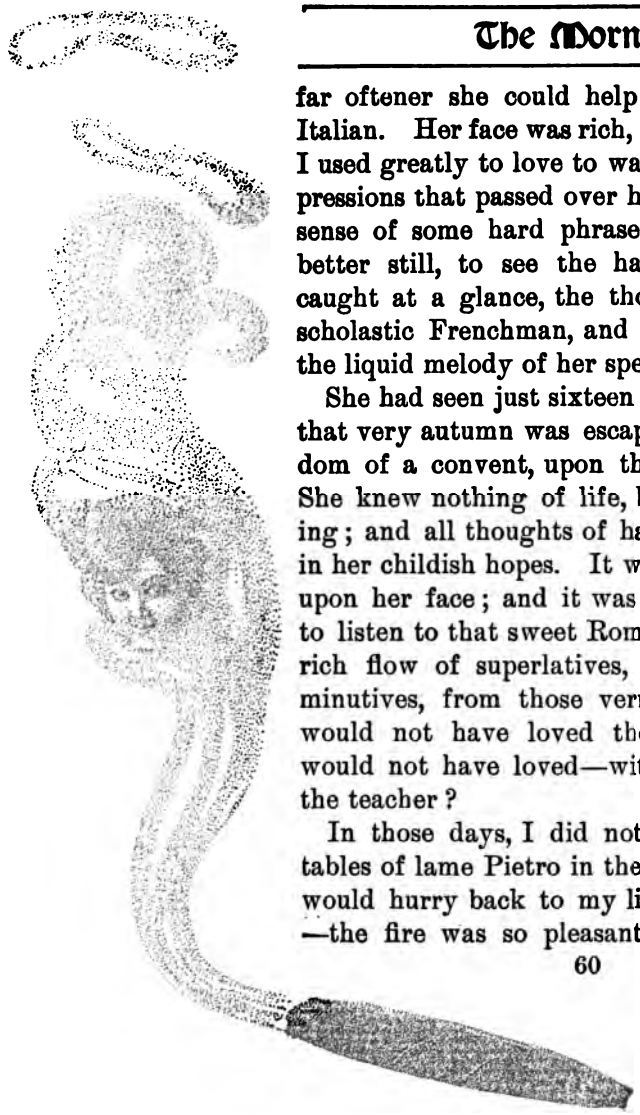
My chamber looked out upon the Corso, and I could catch from it a glimpse of the top of the tall column of Antoninus, and of a fragment of the palace of the governor. My parlor, which was separated from the apartments of the family by a narrow corridor, looked upon a small court, hung around with balconies. From the upper one, a couple of black-eyed girls are occasionally looking out, and they can almost read the title of my book, when I sit by the window. Below are three or four blooming *ragazze*, who are dark-eyed, and have Roman luxuriance of hair. The youngest is a friend of our Enrica, and is of course frequently looking up with all the innocence in the world, to see if Enrica may be looking out.

Night after night, a bright blaze glows upon my hearth, of the alder faggots which they bring from the Albanian hills. Night after

night too, the family come in, to aid my blundering speech and to enjoy the rich sparkling of my faggot fire. Little Cesare, a dark-faced Italian boy, takes up his position with pencil and slate, and draws by the light of the blaze genii and castles. The old one-eyed teacher of Enrica, lays his snuff box upon the table, and his handkerchief across his lap, and with his spectacles upon his nose, and his big fingers on the lesson, runs through the French tenses of the verb *amare*. The father, a sallow-faced, keen-eyed man, with true Italian visage, sits with his arms upon the elbows of his chair, and talks of the pope, or of the weather. A spruce count from the Marches of Ancona, wears a heavy watch seal, and reads Dante with *furore*. The mother, with arms akimbo, looks proudly upon her daughter, and counts her, as well she may, a gem among the Roman beauties.

The table was round, with the fire blazing on one side; there was scarce room for but three upon the other. Signor *il maestro* was one—then Enrica, and next—how well I remember it—came myself. For I could sometimes help Enrica to a word of French; and





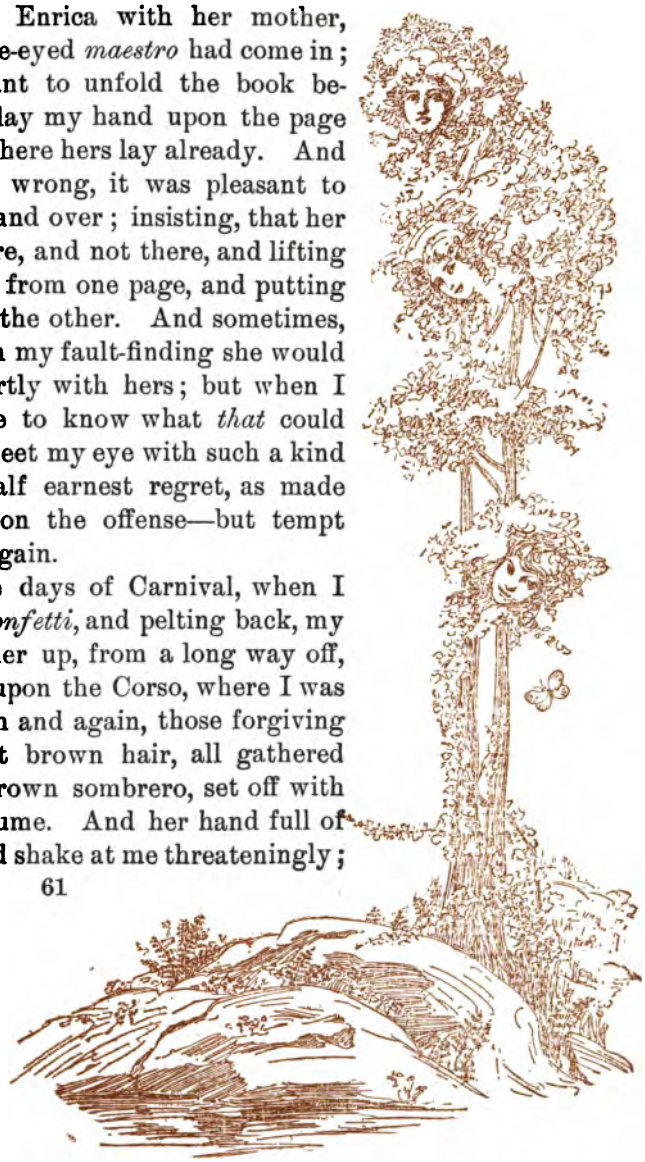
far oftener she could help me to a word of Italian. Her face was rich, and full of feeling; I used greatly to love to watch the puzzled expressions that passed over her forehead, as the sense of some hard phrase escaped her; and better still, to see the happy smile, as she caught at a glance, the thought of some old scholastic Frenchman, and transferred it into the liquid melody of her speech.

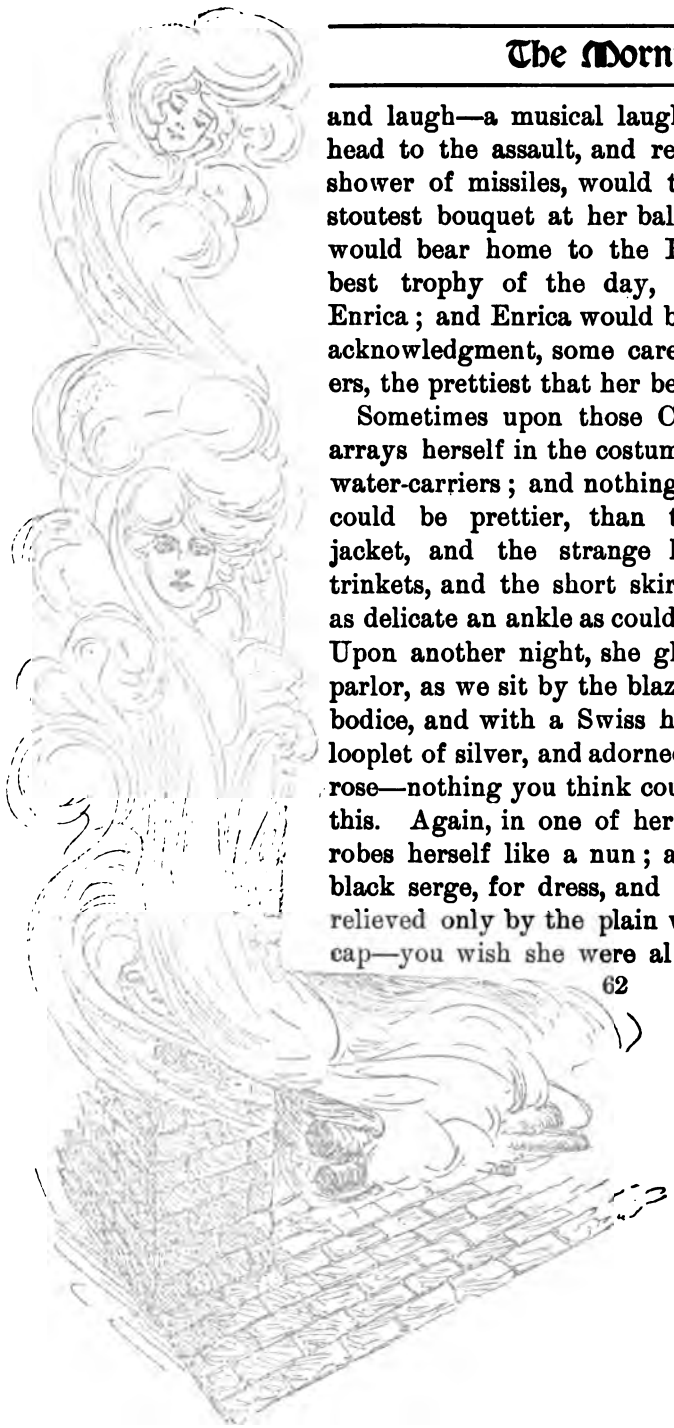
She had seen just sixteen summers, and only that very autumn was escaped from the thraldom of a convent, upon the skirts of Rome. She knew nothing of life, but the life of feeling; and all thoughts of happiness, lay as yet in her childish hopes. It was pleasant to look upon her face; and it was still more pleasant to listen to that sweet Roman voice. What a rich flow of superlatives, and endearing diminutives, from those vermilion lips! Who would not have loved the study, and who would not have loved—without meaning it—the teacher?

In those days, I did not linger long at the tables of lame Pietro in the Via Conditti: but would hurry back to my little Roman parlor—the fire was so pleasant! And it was so

pleasant to greet Enrica with her mother, even before the one-eyed *maestro* had come in; and it was pleasant to unfold the book between us, and to lay my hand upon the page —a small page—where hers lay already. And when she pointed wrong, it was pleasant to correct her—over and over; insisting, that her hand should be here, and not there, and lifting those little fingers from one page, and putting them down upon the other. And sometimes, half provoked with my fault-finding she would pat my hand smartly with hers; but when I looked in her face to know what *that* could mean, she would meet my eye with such a kind submission, and half earnest regret, as made me not only pardon the offense—but tempt me to provoke it again.

Through all the days of Carnival, when I rode pelted with *confetti*, and pelting back, my eyes used to wander up, from a long way off, to that tall house upon the Corso, where I was sure to meet, again and again, those forgiving eyes and that soft brown hair, all gathered under the little brown sombrero, set off with one pure white plume. And her hand full of bon-bons, she would shake at me threateningly;





and laugh—a musical laugh—as I bowed my head to the assault, and recovering from the shower of missiles, would turn to throw my stoutest bouquet at her balcony. At night, I would bear home to the Roman parlor, my best trophy of the day, as a guerdon for Enrica; and Enrica would be sure to render in acknowledgment, some carefully hidden flowers, the prettiest that her beauty had won.

Sometimes upon those Carnival nights, she arrays herself in the costume of the Albanian water-carriers; and nothing, one would think, could be prettier, than the laced crimson jacket, and the strange headgear with its trinkets, and the short skirts leaving to view as delicate an ankle as could be found in Rome. Upon another night, she glides into my little parlor, as we sit by the blaze, in a close velvet bodice, and with a Swiss hat caught up by a looplet of silver, and adorned with a full-blown rose—nothing you think could be prettier than this. Again, in one of her girlish freaks, she robes herself like a nun; and with the heavy black serge, for dress, and the funereal veil—relieved only by the plain white ruffle of her cap—you wish she were always a nun. But

the wish vanishes, when you see her in a pure white muslin, with a wreath of orange blossoms about her forehead, and a single white rose-bud in her bosom.

Upon the little balcony Enrica keeps a pot or two of flowers, which bloom all winter long; and each morning I find upon my table a fresh rose-bud; each night, I bear back for thank-offering, the prettiest bouquet that can be found in the Via Conditti. The quiet fireside evenings come back; in which my hand seeks its wonted place upon her book; and my other, *will* creep around upon the back of Enrica's chair, and Enrica *will* look indignant —and then all forgiveness.

One day I received a large packet of letters —ah, what luxury to lie back in my big arm-chair, there before the crackling faggots, with the pleasant rustle of that silken dress beside me, and run over a second, and a third time, those mute paper missives, which bore to me over so many miles of water, the words of greeting, and of love. It would be worth traveling to the shores of the Ægean, to find one's heart quickened into such life as the ocean letters will make. Enrica threw down

her book, and wondered what could be in them—and snatched one from my hand, and looked with sad, but vain intensity over that strange scrawl. What can it be? said she; and she laid her finger upon the little half line—"Dear Paul."

I told her it was—"*Caro mio.*"

Enrica laid it upon her lap and looked in my face; "It is from your mother?" said she.

"No," said I.

"From your sister?" said she.

"Alas, no!"

"*Il vostro fratello, dunque?*"

"*Nemmeno*"—said I "not from a brother either."

She handed me the letter, and took up her book; and presently she laid the book down again; and looked at the letter, and then at me—and went out.

She did not come in again that evening; in the morning, there was no rose-bud on my table. And when I came at night, with a bouquet from Pietro's at the corner, she asked me—"who had written my letter?"

"A very dear friend," said I.

"A lady?" continued she.

"A lady," said I.

"Keep this bouquet for her," said she, and put it in my hands.

"But, Enrica, she has plenty of flowers; she lives among them, and each morning her children gather them by scores to make garlands of."

Enrica put her fingers within my hand to take again the bouquet; and for a moment I held both fingers and flowers.

The flowers slipped out first.

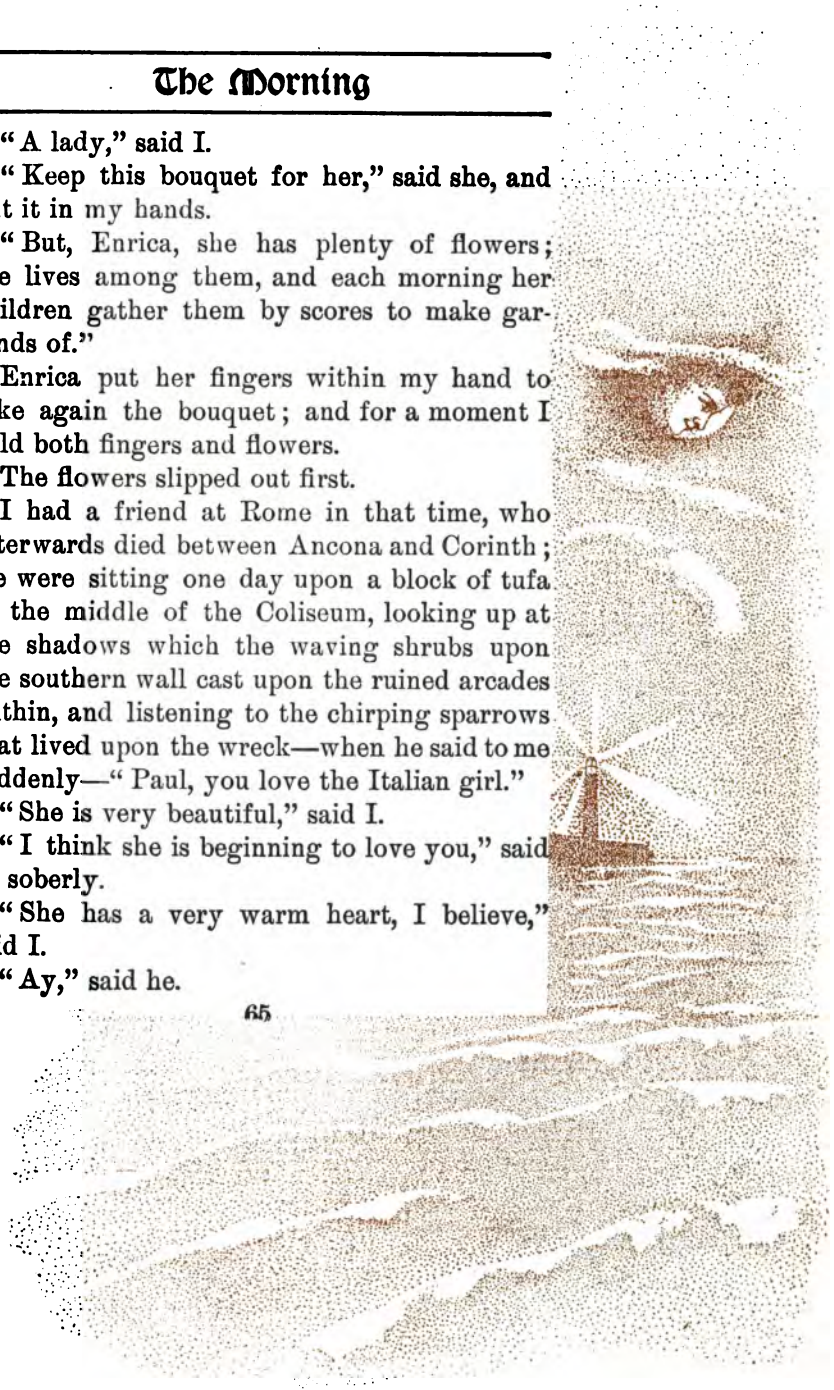
I had a friend at Rome in that time, who afterwards died between Ancona and Corinth; we were sitting one day upon a block of tufa in the middle of the Coliseum, looking up at the shadows which the waving shrubs upon the southern wall cast upon the ruined arcades within, and listening to the chirping sparrows that lived upon the wreck—when he said to me suddenly—"Paul, you love the Italian girl."

"She is very beautiful," said I.

"I think she is beginning to love you," said he soberly.

"She has a very warm heart, I believe," said I.

"Ay," said he.



"But her feelings are those of a girl," continued I.

"They are not," said my friend; and he laid his hand upon my knee, and left off drawing diagrams with his cane; "I have seen, Paul, more than you of this southern nature. The Italian girl of fifteen is a woman; an impassioned, sensitive, tender creature—yet still a woman; you are loving—if you love—a full-grown heart; she is loving—if she loves—as a ripe heart should."

"But I do not think that either is wholly true," said I.

"Try it," said he, setting his cane down firmly, and looking in my face.

"How?" returned I.

"I have three weeks upon my hands," continued he. "Go with me into the Appenines; leave your home in the Corso, and see if you can forget in the air of the mountains, your bright-eyed Roman girl."

I was pondering for an answer, when he went on: "It is better so; love as you might, that southern nature with all its passion, is not the material to build domestic happiness upon; nor is your northern habit—whatever

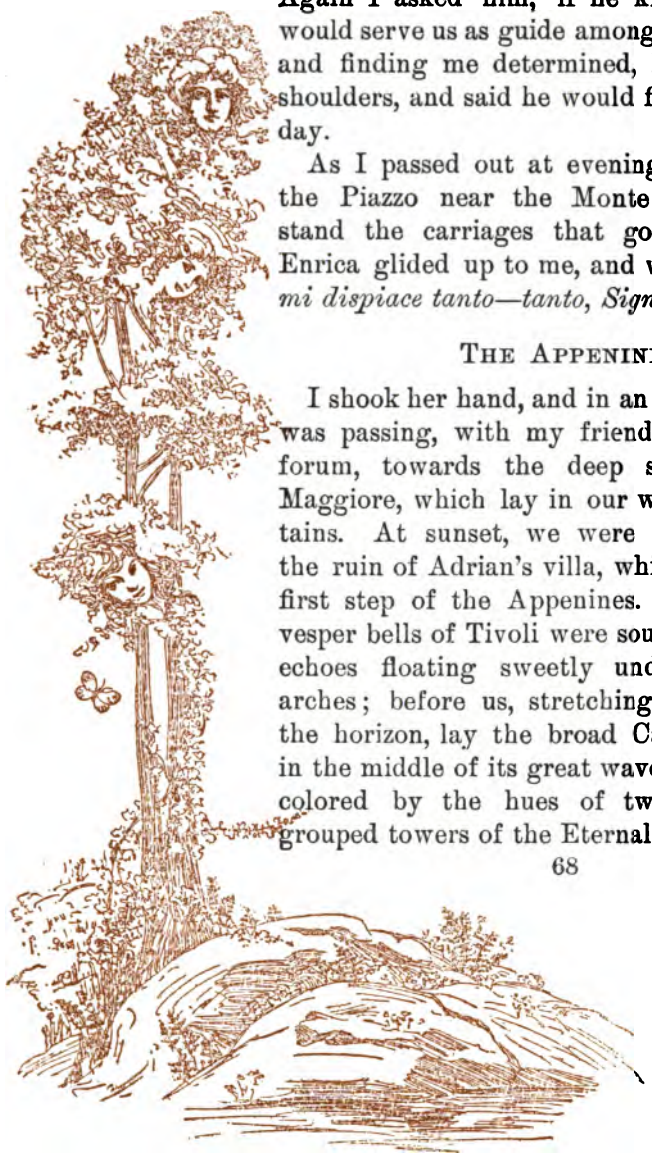
you may think at your time of life, the one to cherish always those passionate sympathies which are bred by this atmosphere, and their scenes."

One moment my thought ran to my little parlor, and to that fairy figure, and to that sweet angel face: and then, like lightning it traversed oceans, and fed upon the old ideal of home, and brought images to my eye of lost—dead ones, who seemed to be stirring on heavenly wings, in that soft Roman atmosphere, with greeting, and with beckoning.

—"I will go with you," said I.

The father shrugged his shoulders, when I told him I was going to the mountains, and wanted a guide. His wife said it would be cold upon the hills, for the winter was not ended. Enrica said it would be warm in the valleys, for the spring was coming. The old man drummed with his fingers on the table, and shrugged his shoulders again, but said nothing.

My landlady said I could not ride. Cesare said it would be hard walking. Enrica asked papa, if there would be any danger? And again the old man shrugged his shoulders.



Again I asked him, if he knew a man who would serve us as guide among the Appenines; and finding me determined, he shrugged his shoulders, and said he would find one the next day.

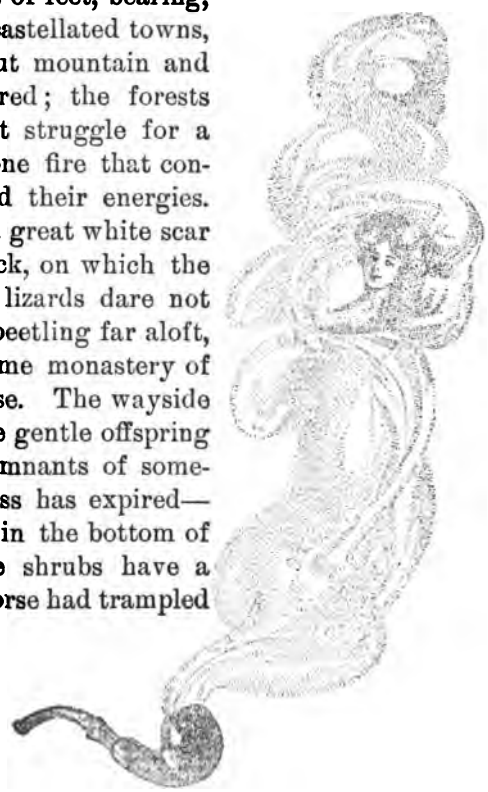
As I passed out at evening, on my way to the Piazzo near the Monte Citorio, where stand the carriages that go out to Tivoli, Enrica glided up to me, and whispered—"*Ah, mi dispiace tanto—tanto, Signor!*"

THE APPENINES

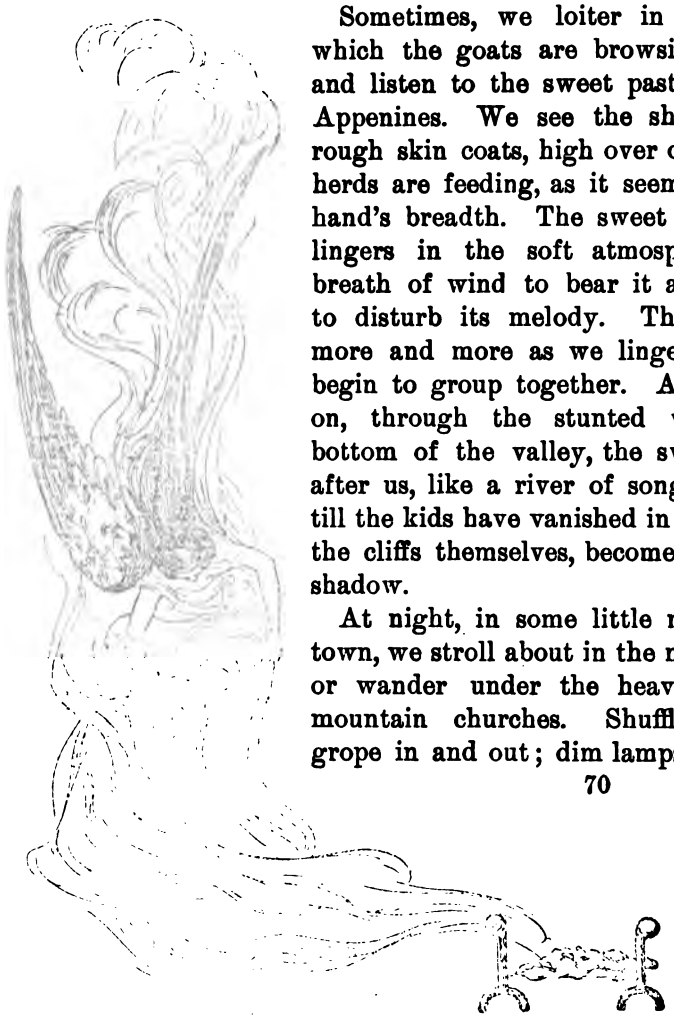
I shook her hand, and in an hour afterwards was passing, with my friend, by the Trajan forum, towards the deep shadow of San Maggiore, which lay in our way to the mountains. At sunset, we were wandering over the ruin of Adrian's villa, which lies upon the first step of the Appenines. Behind us, the vesper bells of Tivoli were sounding, and their echoes floating sweetly under the broken arches; before us, stretching all the way to the horizon, lay the broad Campagna; while in the middle of its great waves, turned violet-colored by the hues of twilight, rose the grouped towers of the Eternal City; and lord-

ing it among them all, like a giant, stood the black dome of St. Peter's.

Day after day we stretched on over the mountains, leaving the Campagna far behind us. Rocks and stones, huge and ragged, lie strewn over the surface right and left; deep yawning valleys lie in the shadows of mountains, that loom up thousands of feet, bearing, perhaps, upon their tops old castellated towns, perched like birds' nests. But mountain and valley are blasted and scarred; the forests even, are not continuous, but struggle for a livelihood; as if the brimstone fire that consumed Nineveh, had withered their energies. Sometimes, our eyes rest on a great white scar of the broken calcareous rock, on which the moss cannot grow, and the lizards dare not creep. Then we see a cliff beetling far aloft, with the shining walls of some monastery of holy men glistening at its base. The wayside brooks do not seem to be the gentle offspring of bountiful hills, but the remnants of something greater, whose greatness has expired—they are turbid rills, rolling in the bottom of yawning chasms. Even the shrubs have a look, as if the Volscian war-horse had trampled



them down to death; and the primroses and the violets by the mountain path, alone look modestly beautiful amid the ruin.

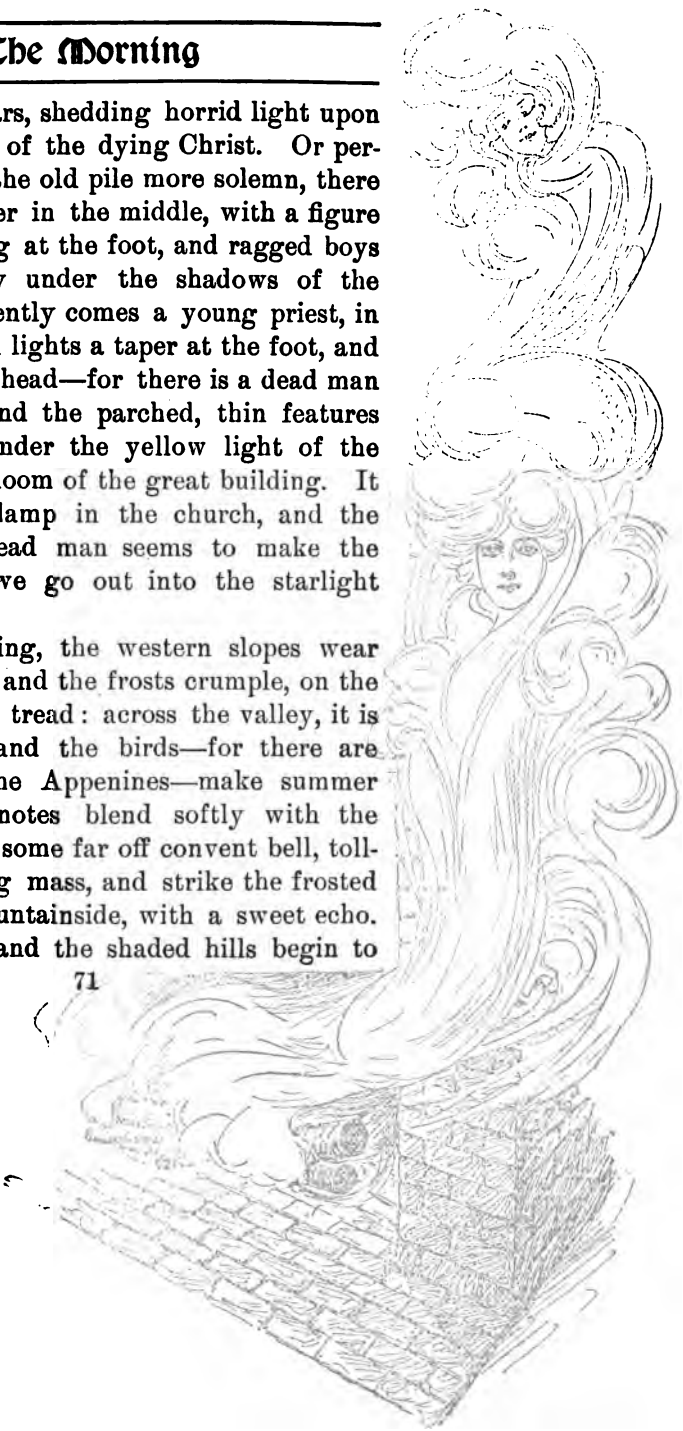


Sometimes, we loiter in a valley, above which the goats are browsing on the cliffs, and listen to the sweet pastoral pipes of the Appenines. We see the shepherds in their rough skin coats, high over our heads. Their herds are feeding, as it seems, on ledges of a hand's breadth. The sweet sound floats and lingers in the soft atmosphere, without a breath of wind to bear it away, or a noise to disturb its melody. The shadows slant more and more as we linger; and the kids begin to group together. And as we wander on, through the stunted vineyard in the bottom of the valley, the sweet sound flows after us, like a river of song—nor leaves us, till the kids have vanished in the distance, and the cliffs themselves, become one dark wall of shadow.

At night, in some little meager mountain town, we stroll about in the narrow pass-ways, or wander under the heavy arches of the mountain churches. Shuffling old women grope in and out; dim lamps glimmer faintly

at the side altars, shedding horrid light upon painted images of the dying Christ. Or perhaps, to make the old pile more solemn, there stands some bier in the middle, with a figure or two kneeling at the foot, and ragged boys move stealthily under the shadows of the columns. Presently comes a young priest, in black robes, and lights a taper at the foot, and another at the head—for there is a dead man on the bier; and the parched, thin features look awfully under the yellow light of the tapers, in the gloom of the great building. It is very, very damp in the church, and the body of the dead man seems to make the air heavy, so we go out into the starlight again.

In the morning, the western slopes wear broad shadows, and the frosts crumple, on the herbage, to our tread: across the valley, it is like summer; and the birds—for there are songsters in the Appenines—make summer music. Their notes blend softly with the faint sounds of some far off convent bell, tolling for morning mass, and strike the frosted and shaded mountainside, with a sweet echo. As we toil on, and the shaded hills begin to



glow in the sunshine, we pass a train of mules, loaded with wine. We have seen them an hour before—little black dots twining along the white streak of foot-way upon the mountain above us. We lost them as we began to ascend, until a wild snatch of an Appenine song turned our eyes up, and there, straggling through the brush, they appeared again; a foot slip would have brought the mules and wine casks rolling upon us. We keep still, holding by the brushwood, to let them pass. An hour more, and we see them toiling slowly—mule and muleteer—big dots and little dots—far down where we have been before. The sun is hot and smoking on them in the bare valleys; the sun is hot and smoking on the hillside, where we are toiling over the broken stones. I thought of little Enrica, when she said: "the spring was coming!"

Time and again, we sit down together—my friend and I—upon some fragment of rock, under the broad-armed chestnuts, that fringe the lower skirts of the mountains, and talk through the hottest of the noon, of the warriors of Sylla, and of the Sabine woman—but oftener—of the pretty peasantry, and of

the sweet-faced Roman girl. He too tells me of his life and loves, and of the hopes that lie misty and grand before him: little did we think that in so few years, his hopes would be gone, and his body lying low in the Adriatic, or tossed with the drift upon the Dalmatian shores! Little did I think that here under the ancestral wood—still a wishful and blundering mortal, I should be gathering up the shreds, that memory can catch of our Appenine wandering, and be weaving them into my bachelor dreams.

Away again upon the quick wing of thought, I follow our steps, as after weeks of wandering, we gained once more a height that overlooked the Campagna—and saw the sun setting on its edge, throwing into relief the dome of St. Peter's, and blazing in a red stripe upon the waters of the Tiber.

Below us was Palestrina—the Præneste of the poets and philosophers; the dwelling-place of —I know not how many—emperors. We went straggling through the dirty streets, searching for some tidy-looking osteria. At length, we found an old lady, who could give us a bed, but no dinner. My friend dropped in a chair dis-

heartened. A snub-looking priest came out to condole with us.

And could Palestrina—the *frigidum Præneste* of Horace, which had entertained over and over, the noblest of the Colonna, and the most noble Adrian—could Palestrina not furnish a dinner to a tired traveler?

"*Si, Signore,*" said the snub-looking priest.

"*Si, Signorino,*" said the neat old lady; and away we went upon a new search. And we found bright and happy faces; especially the little girl of twelve years, who came close by me as I ate, and afterwards strung a garland of marigolds, and put it on my head. Then there was a bright-eyed boy of fourteen, who wrote his name, and those of the whole family, upon a fly-leaf of my book; and a pretty, saucy-looking girl of sixteen, who peeped a long time from behind the kitchen door, but before the evening was gone, she was in the chair beside me, and had written her name—Carlotta—upon the first leaf of my journal.

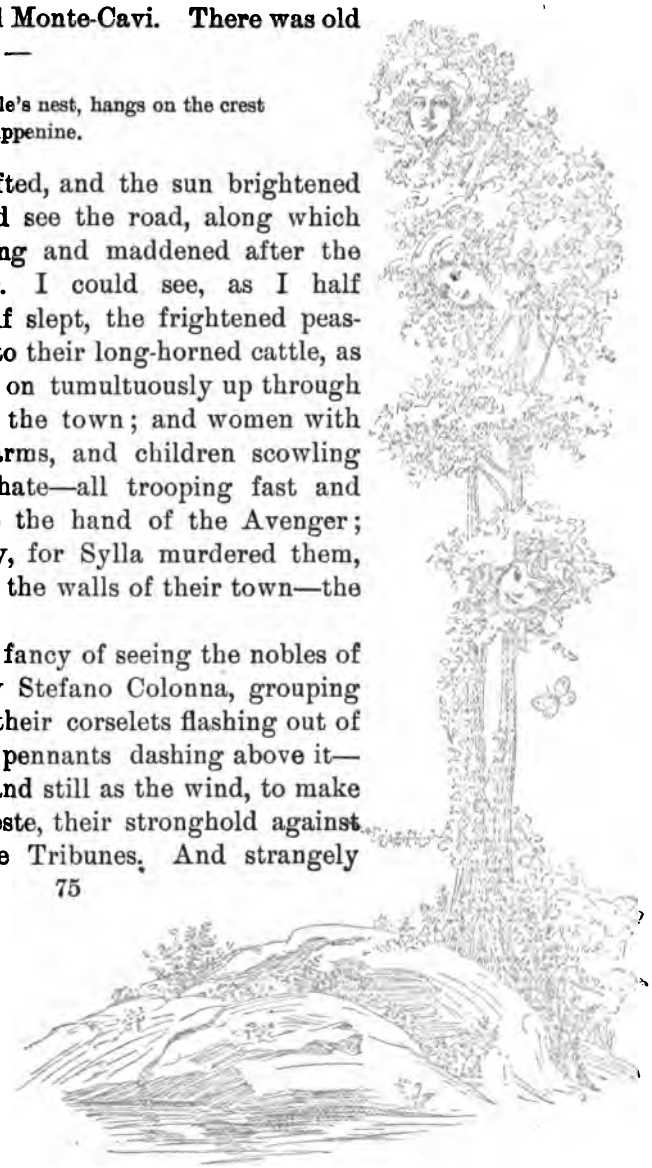
When I woke, the sun was up. From my bed I could see over the town, the thin, lazy mists lying on the old camp-ground of Pyrrhus; beyond it, were the mountains, which

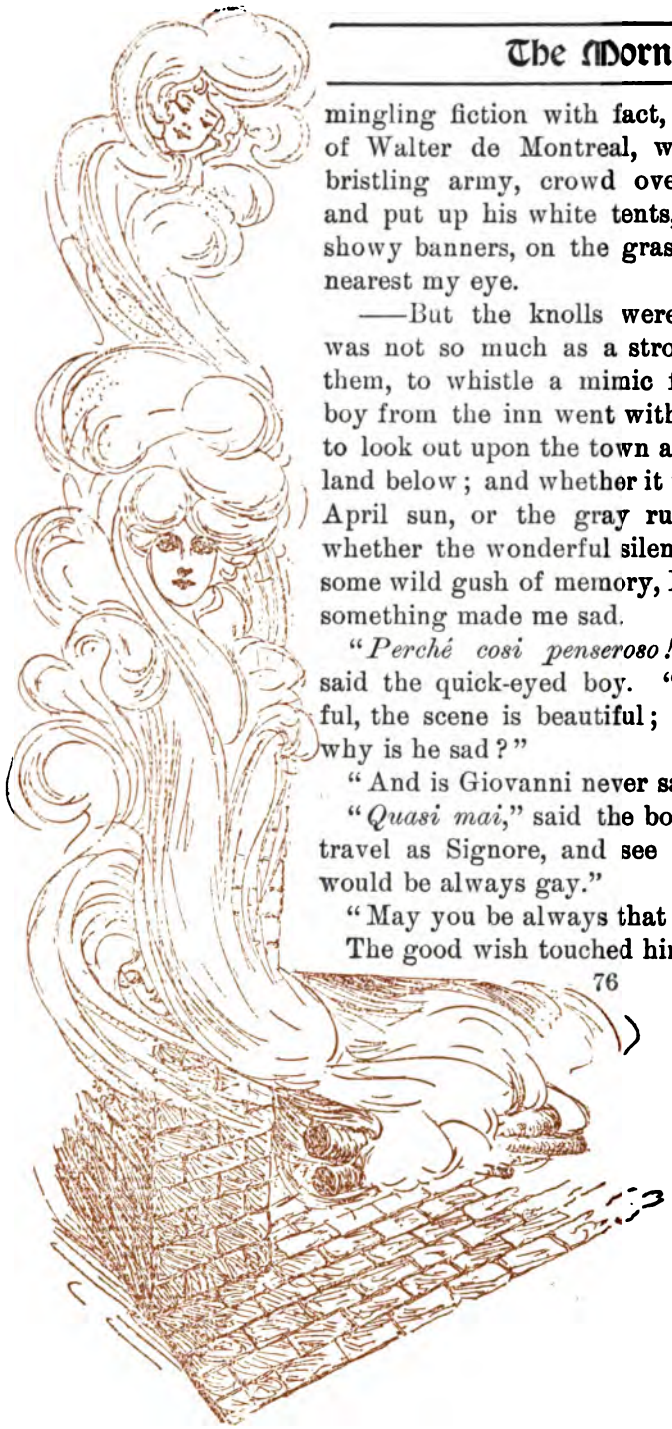
hide Frascati, and Monte-Cavi. There was old Colonna too, that —

> Like an eagle's nest, hangs on the crest
> Of purple Appenine.

As the mist lifted, and the sun brightened the plain, I could see the road, along which Sylla came fuming and maddened after the Mithridaten war. I could see, as I half dreamed and half slept, the frightened peasantry whooping to their long-horned cattle, as they drove them on tumultuously up through the gateways of the town; and women with babies in their arms, and children scowling with fear and hate—all trooping fast and madly, to escape the hand of the Avenger; alas! ineffectually, for Sylla murdered them, and pulled down the walls of their town—the proud Palestrina.

I had a queer fancy of seeing the nobles of Rome, led on by Stefano Colonna, grouping along the plain, their corselets flashing out of the mists—their pennants dashing above it—coming up fast, and still as the wind, to make the Mural Præneste, their stronghold against the Last of the Tribunes. And strangely





mingling fiction with fact, I saw the brother of Walter de Montreal, with his noisy and bristling army, crowd over the Campagna, and put up his white tents, and hang out his showy banners, on the grassy knolls that lay nearest my eye.

——But the knolls were all quiet; there was not so much as a strolling *contadino* on them, to whistle a mimic fife-note. A little boy from the inn went with me upon the hill, to look out upon the town and the wide sea of land below; and whether it was the soft, warm April sun, or the gray ruins below me, or whether the wonderful silence of the scene, or some wild gush of memory, I do not know, but something made me sad.

"*Perché cosi penseroso!*—why so sad?" said the quick-eyed boy. "The air is beautiful, the scene is beautiful; Signore is young, why is he sad?"

"And is Giovanni never sad?" said I.

"*Quasi mai*," said the boy, "and if I could travel as Signore, and see other countries, I would be always gay."

"May you be always that!" said I.

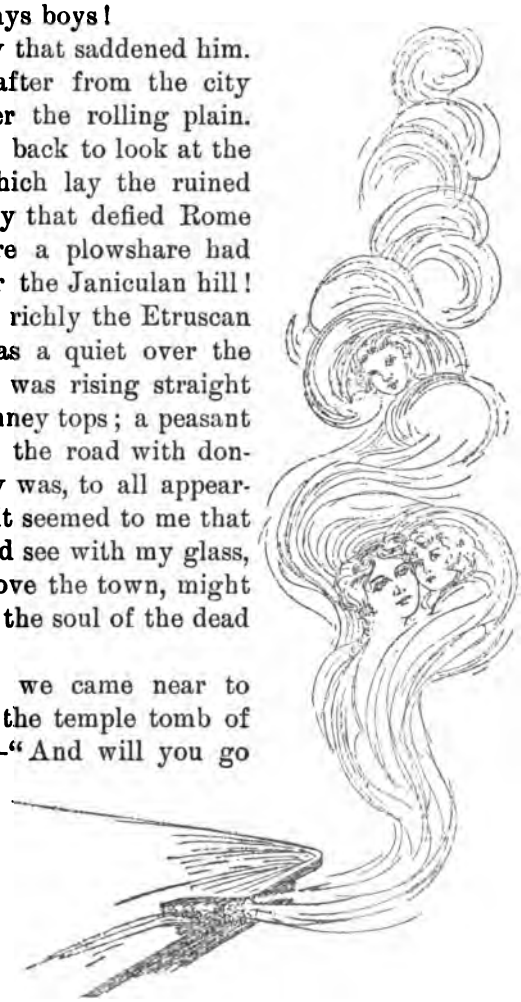
The good wish touched him; he took me by

the arms, and said—"Go home with me, Signore; you were happy at the inn last night; go back, and we will make you gay again!"

——If we could be always boys!

I thanked him in a way that saddened him. We passed out shortly after from the city gates, and strode on over the rolling plain. Once or twice we turned back to look at the rocky heights beneath which lay the ruined town of Palestrina—a city that defied Rome—that had a king before a plowshare had touched the Capitoline, or the Janiculan hill! The ivy was covering up richly the Etruscan foundations, and there was a quiet over the whole place. The smoke was rising straight into the sky from the chimney tops; a peasant or two, were going along the road with donkeys; beside this, the city was, to all appearance, a dead city. And it seemed to me that an old monk, whom I could see with my glass, near the little chapel above the town, might be going to say mass for the soul of the dead city.

And afterwards, when we came near to Rome, and passed under the temple tomb of Metella—my friend said—"And will you go



back now to your home? or will you set off with me to-morrow for Ancona?"

"At least, I must say adieu," returned I.

"God speed you!" said he, and we parted upon the Piazza di Venezia—he for his last mass at St. Peter's, and I for the tall house upon the Corso.

ENRICA

I hear her glancing feet, the moment I have tinkled the bell: and there she is, with her brown hair gathered into braids, and her eyes full of joy, and greeting. And as I walk with the mother to the window to look at some pageant that is passing—she steals up behind, and passes her arm around me, with a quick electric motion, and a general pressure of welcome—that tells more than a thousand words.

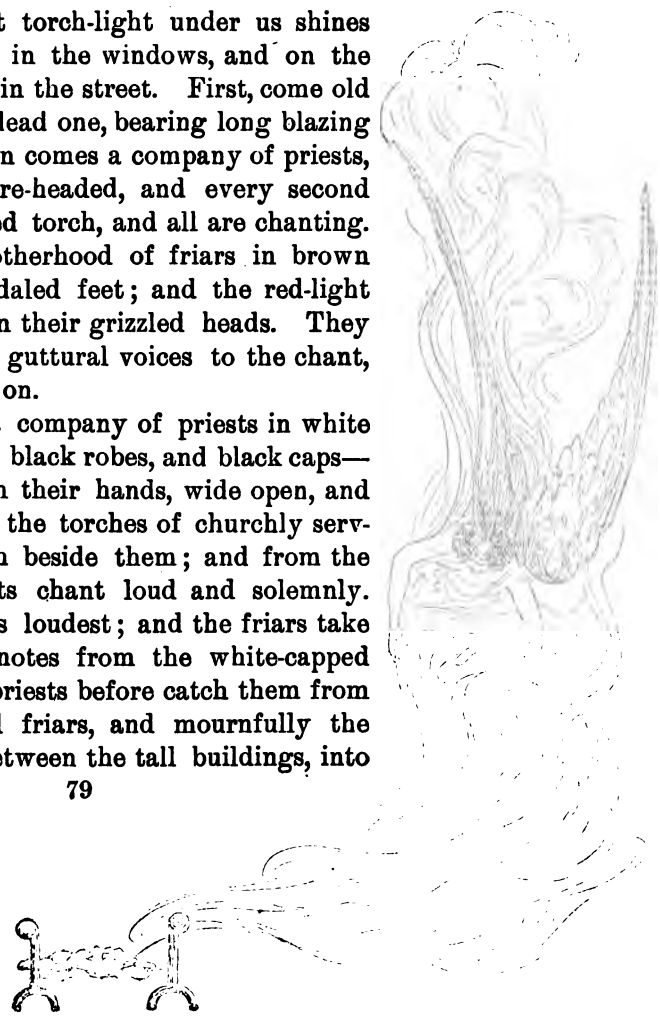
It is a pageant of death that is passing below. Far down the street, we see heads thrust out of the windows, and standing in bold relief against the red torch-light of the moving train. Below, dim figures are gathering on the narrow sideways to look at the solemn spectacle. A hoarse chant rises louder, and

louder; and half dies in the night air, and breaks out again with new, and deep bitterness.

Now, the first torch-light under us shines plainly on faces in the windows, and on the kneeling women in the street. First, come old retainers of the dead one, bearing long blazing flambeaux. Then comes a company of priests, two by two, bare-headed, and every second one with a lighted torch, and all are chanting.

Next, is a brotherhood of friars in brown cloaks, with sandaled feet; and the red-light streams full upon their grizzled heads. They add their heavy guttural voices to the chant, and pass slowly on.

Then comes a company of priests in white muslin capes, and black robes, and black caps—bearing books in their hands, wide open, and lit up plainly by the torches of churchly servitors, who march beside them; and from the books the priests chant loud and solemnly. Now the music is loudest; and the friars take up the dismal notes from the white-capped priests, and the priests before catch them from the brown-robed friars, and mournfully the sound rises up between the tall buildings, into



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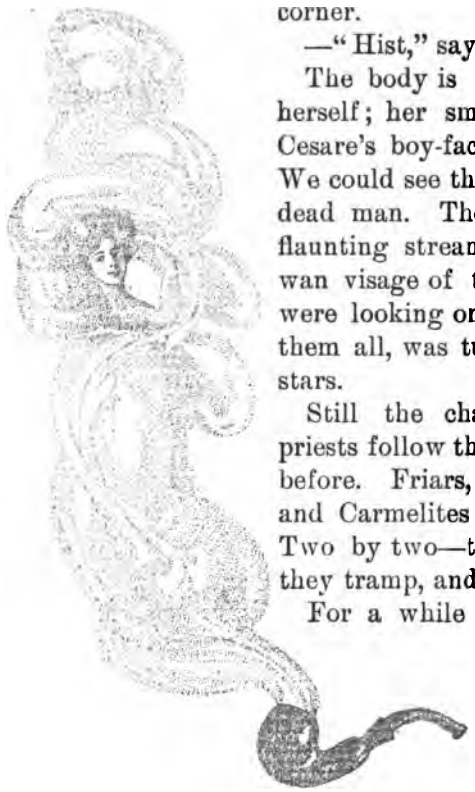
the blue night-sky that lies between Heaven and Rome.

—"*Vede*—*Vede!*" says Cesare; and in a blaze of the red-torch fire, comes the bier, borne on the necks of stout friars; and on the bier, is the body of a dead man, habited like a priest. Heavy plumes of black wave at each corner.



—"Hist," says my landlady.

The body is just under us. Enrica crosses herself; her smile is for the moment gone. Cesare's boy-face is grown suddenly earnest. We could see the pale youthful features of the dead man. The glaring flambeaux, sent their flaunting streams of unearthly light over the wan visage of the sleeper. A thousand eyes were looking on him; but his face careless of them all, was turned up, straight towards the stars.

Still the chant rises; and companies of priests follow the bier, like those who had gone before. Friars, in brown cloaks, and prelates and Carmelites come after—all with torches. Two by two—their voices growing hoarse—they tramp, and chant.

For a while the voices cease, and you can

hear the rustling of their robes, and their foot-falls, as if your ear was to the earth. Then the chant rises again, as they glide on in a wavy shining line, and rolls back over the death-train, like the howling of a wind in winter.

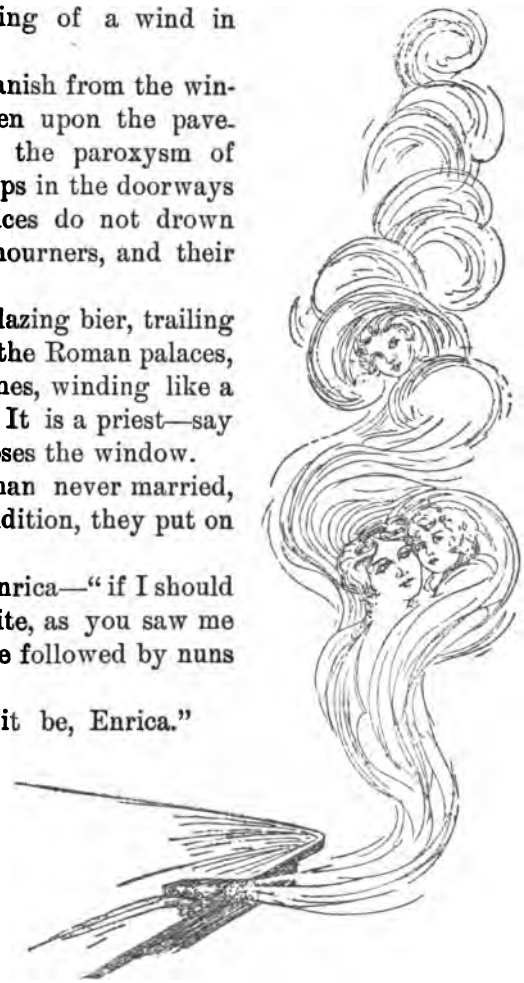
As they pass, the faces vanish from the windows. The kneeling women upon the pavement, rise up, mindful of the paroxysm of Life once more. The groups in the doorways scatter. But their low voices do not drown the voices of the host of mourners, and their ghost-like music.

I look long upon the blazing bier, trailing under the deep shadows of the Roman palaces, and at the stream of torches, winding like a glittering, scaled serpent. It is a priest—say I to my landlady as she closes the window.

"No, signor—a young man never married, and so by virtue of his condition, they put on him the priest-robes."

"So I," says the pretty Enrica—"if I should die, would be robed in white, as you saw me on a carnival night, and be followed by nuns for sisters."

"A long way off may it be, Enrica."



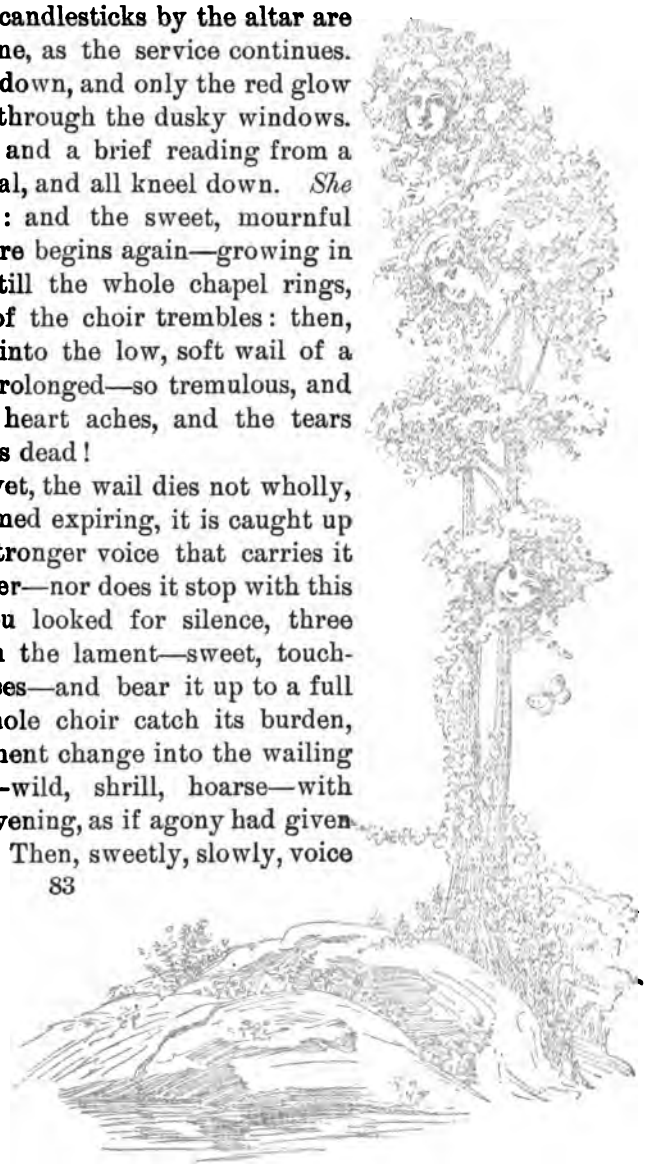
She took my hand in hers, and pressed it. An Italian girl does not fear to talk of death; and we were talking of it still, as we walked back to my little parlor—my hand all the time in hers—and sat down by the blaze of my fire.

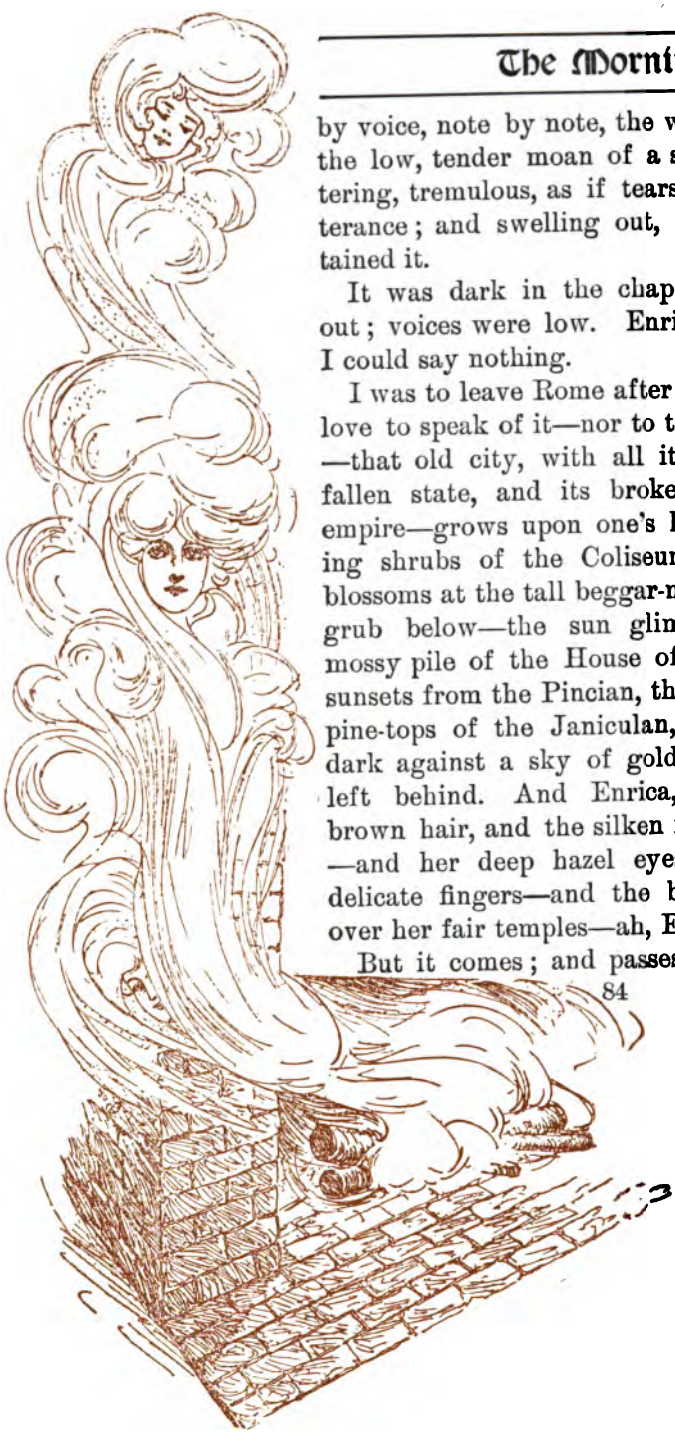
It was holy week—never had Enrica looked more sweetly than in that black dress—under that long, dark veil of the days of Lent. Upon the broad pavement of St. Peter's—where the people flocking by thousands, made only side groups about the altars of the vast temple—I have watched her kneeling, beside her mother—her eyes bent down, her lips moving earnestly, and her whole figure tremulous with deep emotion. Wandering around among the halberdiers of the pope, and the court coats of Austria, and the bare-footed pilgrims with sandal, shell and staff, I would sidle back again to look upon that kneeling figure; and leaning against the huge columns of the church, would dream—even as I am dreaming now.

At nightfall, I urged my way into the Sistine Chapel: Eurica is beside me—looking with me upon the gaunt figures of the Judgment of Angelo. They are chanting the Miser-

ere. The twelve candlesticks by the altar are put out one by one, as the service continues. The sun has gone down, and only the red glow of twilight steals through the dusky windows. There is a pause, and a brief reading from a red-cloaked cardinal, and all kneel down. *She* kneels beside me: and the sweet, mournful flow of the Miserere begins again—growing in force, and depth, till the whole chapel rings, and the balcony of the choir trembles: then, it subsides again into the low, soft wail of a single voice—so prolonged—so tremulous, and so real, that the heart aches, and the tears start—for Christ is dead!

——Lingering yet, the wail dies not wholly, but just as it seemed expiring, it is caught up by another and stronger voice that carries it on, plaintive as ever—nor does it stop with this—for just as you looked for silence, three voices more begin the lament—sweet, touching, mournful voices—and bear it up to a full cry, when the whole choir catch its burden, and make the lament change into the wailing of a multitude—wild, shrill, hoarse—with swift chants intervening, as if agony had given force to anguish. Then, sweetly, slowly, voice





by voice, note by note, the wailings sink into the low, tender moan of a single singer—faltering, tremulous, as if tears checked the utterance; and swelling out, as if despair sustained it.

It was dark in the chapel when we went out; voices were low. Enrica said nothing—I could say nothing.

I was to leave Rome after Easter; I did not love to speak of it—nor to think of it. Rome—that old city, with all its misery, and its fallen state, and its broken palaces of the empire—grows upon one's heart. The fringing shrubs of the Coliseum, flaunting their blossoms at the tall beggar-men in cloaks, who grub below—the sun glimmering over the mossy pile of the House of Nero—the sweet sunsets from the Pincian, that make the broad pine-tops of the Janiculan, stand sharp and dark against a sky of gold, cannot easily be left behind. And Enrica, with her silver-brown hair, and the silken fillet that bound it—and her deep hazel eyes—and her white, delicate fingers—and the blue veins chasing over her fair temples—ah, Easter is too near!

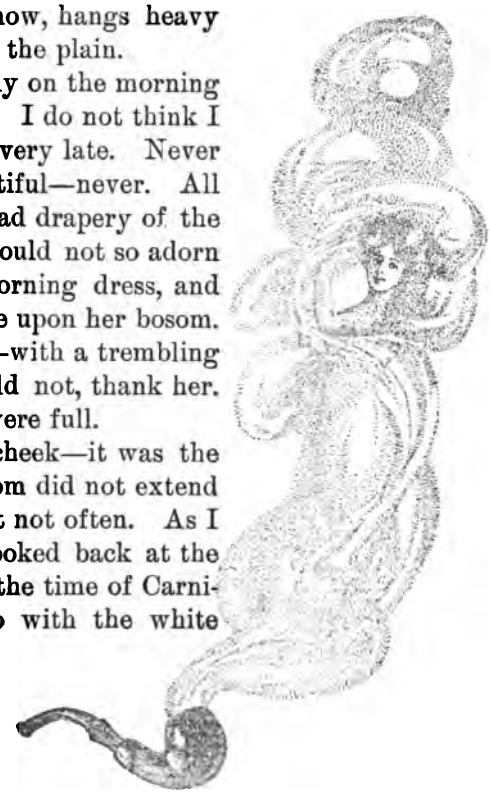
But it comes; and passes with the glory of

St. Peter's—lighted from top to bottom. With Enrica—I saw it from the Ripetta, as it loomed up in the distance, like a city on fire.

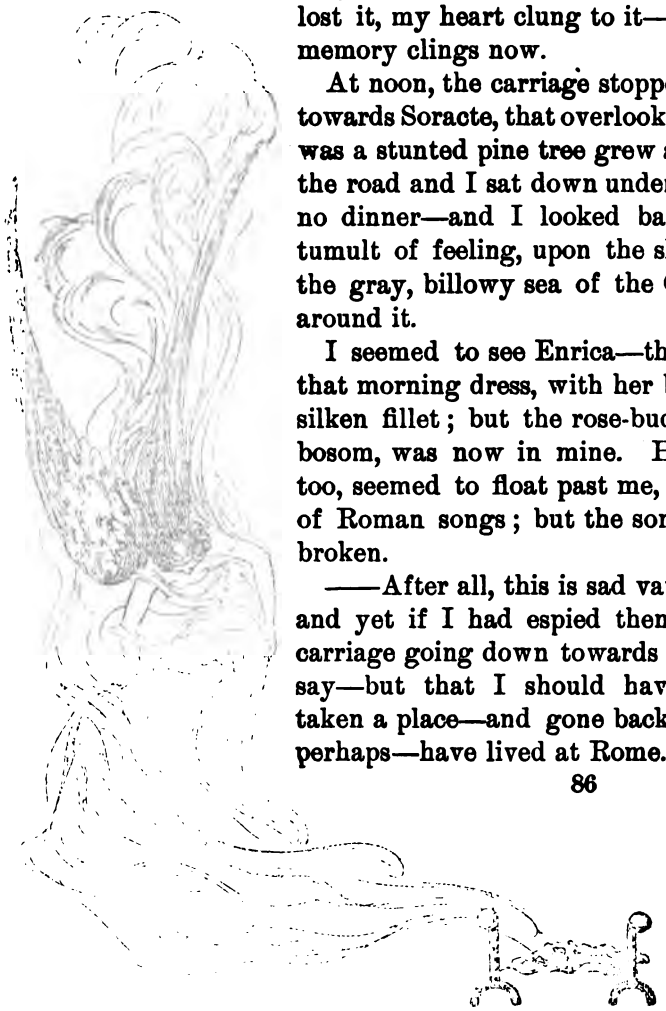
The next day, I bring home my last bunch of flowers, and with it a little richly-chased Roman ring. No fire blazes on the hearth—but they are all there. Warm days have come, and the summer air, even now, hangs heavy with fever, in the hollows of the plain.

I heard them stirring early on the morning on which I was to go away. I do not think I slept very well myself—nor very late. Never did Enrica look more beautiful—never. All her carnival robes, and the sad drapery of the FRIDAY OF CRUCIFIXION could not so adorn her beauty as that neat morning dress, and that simple rosebud she wore upon her bosom. She gave it to me—the last—with a trembling hand. I did not, for I could not, thank her. She knew it; and her eyes were full.

The old man kissed my cheek—it was the Roman custom, but the custom did not extend to the Roman girls; at least not often. As I passed down the Corso, I looked back at the balcony, where she stood in the time of Carnival, in the brown sombrero with the white



plume. I knew she would be there now; and there she was. My eyes dwelt upon the vision, very loth to leave it; and after my eyes had lost it, my heart clung to it—there, where my memory clings now.



At noon, the carriage stopped upon the hills, towards Soracte, that overlooked Rome. There was a stunted pine tree grew a little way from the road and I sat down under it—for I wished no dinner—and I looked back with strange tumult of feeling, upon the sleeping city with the gray, billowy sea of the Campagna, lying around it.

I seemed to see Enrica—the Roman girl, in that morning dress, with her brown hair in its silken fillet; but the rose-bud that was in her bosom, was now in mine. Her silvery voice too, seemed to float past me, bearing snatches of Roman songs; but the songs were sad and broken.

——After all, this is sad vanity! thought I: and yet if I had espied then some returning carriage going down towards Rome, I will not say—but that I should have hailed it, and taken a place—and gone back, and to this day perhaps—have lived at Rome.

But the vetturino called me; the coach was ready—I gave one more look towards the dome that guarded the sleeping city: and then we galloped down the mountain, on the road that lay towards Perugia, and Lake Thrasimene.

——Sweet Enrica! art thou living yet? Or hast thou passed away to that Silent Land, where the good sleep, and the beautiful?

The visions of the past fade. The morning breeze has died upon the meadow; the Bob-o'-Lincoln sits swaying on the willow tufts—singing no longer. The trees lean to the brook; but the shadows fall straight and dense upon the silver stream.

NOON has broken into the middle sky; and MORNING is gone.

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